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The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen and the Cultural Politics of Homoeroticism in Germany, 1896-1933

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The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen and the Cultural Politics of Homoeroticism in Germany, 1896-1933

Abstract
The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (The Society of the Self-Determined) was established in 1903 on the outskirts of Berlin to realize the social and political goals espoused by its leader: the author, photographer, and perennial activist, Adolf Brand (1874–1945). Inspired by anarchist political thought, Brand and the organization's members used a rhetoric of personal liberation to advocate for greater social acceptance of male bonding and intimacy and to promote a cult of youthful beauty. The group's unwavering faith in the transformative power of culture was central to the realization of these objectives. A secondary goal was the elimination from the German penal code of Paragraph 175, the statute that prohibited "unnatural acts" between men. This dissertation considers how prominent members of the group contributed to and reacted against the emerging political and scientific debates about the nature of male sexuality in Germany. Representative pieces of literature and visual art produced by the group's members are examined within the context of the era's shifting crosscurrents of political ideology, spirituality, and scientific theory in order to provide greater insight into the cultural anxieties and obsessions of German society. Source material is largely drawn from the thirteen volumes of the organization's flagship publication, Der Eigene—published intermittently from 1896 until 1932 and now regarded as the world's first homosexual journal. In its pages, homoerotic literature, illustrations, and photography depicted an honorable masculine tradition of camaraderie and brotherhood that extended from ancient Greece, through the valor of medieval knights, and into the modern era. Although themselves victims of much prejudice, the group that coalesced around Brand and his magazine was not especially enlightened on many social causes. This myopia is partly explained by the group's emphasis on inherited tradition. Such an emphasis led many of the group's members to be resolutely anti-feminist, disdainful of the women's rights movement, and increasingly anti-Semitic. Finally, the dissertation evaluates the collapse and failure of Brand's political goals as well as his ill-fated project to "rescue" German men and intimate male relationships from what he perceived to be the corrupting influences of femininity and scientific investigation.

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THE GEMEINSCHAFT DER EIGENEN AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF HOMOEROTICISM
IN GERMANY, 1896–1933

John Herbert Roper, Jr.

A DISSERTATION

in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

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Frank Trommler, Professor Emeritus of German & Comparative Literature
For my parents
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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who are my first and best teachers. They have each devoted themselves to a lifetime of teaching and student
service. Through their hard work and example I learned gratitude, determination, and unconditional love.
ABSTRACT

THE GEMEINSCHAFT DER EIGENEN AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF HOMOEROTICISM IN GERMANY, 1896–1933

John Herbert Roper, Jr.

Thomas Childers

The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (The Society of the Self-Determined) was established in 1903 on the outskirts of Berlin to realize the social and political goals espoused by its leader: the author, photographer, and perennial activist, Adolf Brand (1874–1945). Inspired by anarchist political thought, Brand and the organization’s members used a rhetoric of personal liberation to advocate for greater social acceptance of male bonding and intimacy and to promote a cult of youthful beauty. The group’s unwavering faith in the transformative power of culture was central to the realization of these objectives. A secondary goal was the elimination from the German penal code of Paragraph 175, the statute that prohibited “unnatural acts” between men. This dissertation considers how prominent members of the group contributed to and reacted against the emerging political and scientific debates about the nature of male sexuality in Germany. Representative pieces of literature and visual art produced by the group’s members are examined within the context of the era’s shifting crosscurrents of political ideology, spirituality, and scientific theory in order to provide greater insight into the cultural anxieties and obsessions of German society. Source material is largely drawn from the thirteen volumes of the organization’s flagship publication, Der Eigene — published intermittently
from 1896 until 1932 and now regarded as the world’s first homosexual journal. In its
pages, homoerotic literature, illustrations, and photography depicted an honorable
masculine tradition of camaraderie and brotherhood that extended from ancient Greece,
through the valor of medieval knights, and into the modern era. Although themselves
victims of much prejudice, the group that coalesced around Brand and his magazine was
not especially enlightened on many social causes. This myopia is partly explained by the
group’s emphasis on inherited tradition. Such an emphasis led many of the group’s
members to be resolutely anti-feminist, disdainful of the women’s rights movement, and
increasingly anti-Semitic. Finally, the dissertation evaluates the collapse and failure of
Brand’s political goals as well as his ill-fated project to “rescue” German men and
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INTRODUCTION

The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (Society of the Self-Determined, or GdE) was established in 1903 on the outskirts of Berlin to realize the social and political goals espoused by its leader: the author, photographer, and perennial activist, Adolf Brand (1874–1945). Inspired by anarchist political thought, Brand and the organization’s members used a rhetoric of personal liberation to advocate for greater social acceptance of male bonding and intimacy and to promote a cult of youthful beauty. This view was enshrined by Brand in the organization’s bylaws:

The G.D.E. claims the absolute right for artists and authors to celebrate the love of a friend at the same level as that afforded to the love of a woman. And to represent and glorify romantic friendship and youthful beauty, with all its heights and depths, through word and image—just as is already accorded to the love of women and the beauty of girls—as well as obtain for them the highest regard and recognition throughout the world.¹

A secondary but nonetheless important goal was the elimination from the German penal code of Paragraph 175, the statute that prohibited “unnatural acts” between men. Central to the realization of these objectives, Brand and other members of the group maintained an unwavering faith in the transformative power of culture.

This dissertation considers how Brand and other prominent members of the GdE contributed to and reacted against the emerging social, political, and scientific debates in Germany about the nature of masculinity and male sexuality. Source material is largely drawn from the thirteen volumes of the organization’s flagship publication, Der Eigene—

published intermittently from 1896 until 1932 and now regarded as the world’s first homosexual journal. Contrary to contemporaneous scientific theory and popular opinion, Brand and the contributors to *Der Eigene* were united in their conviction that men who engaged in intense same-sex relationships were neither socially deviant nor medically suspect. As a result, the GdE outright refused to use the term “homosexual,” associated with effeminacy and biological determinism. Rather, the journal’s homoerotic literature, illustrations, and photography depicted an honorable masculine cultural tradition of camaraderie and brotherhood that extended from ancient Greece, through the valor of medieval knights, and into the modern era.

In the context of the dynamic social change and rapid economic growth experienced in post-Bismarckian Germany, male sexuality (as defined primarily by heterosexual gender norms for both men and women) was but one of many sites of social confrontation. Yet male sexuality emerged as a particularly contested and freighted symbol for the numerous anxieties about Germany’s political, diplomatic, military, and economic strength on the global stage. These debates about sexuality were multi-faceted, encompassing issues of masculinity, the increasing prominence of women in society, changes to family life and marriage, as well as the popularity of psychiatric and biological inquiries into the origins of desire and sexual attraction. In this context, discussions about male sexuality—and homosexuality especially—cut across class, political, and confessional divisions.

The GdE conceived of its actions and cultural production as a radical critique of bourgeois morality. Yet to achieve any measure of success, the group ultimately
depended on the support of an educated middle class. This tension also provides insight into the contested nature of cultural renewal in Germany prior to the First World War. Cultural renewal was simultaneously a route to self-empowerment for the bourgeoisie and a defensive strategy for the Prussian ruling class, whose hold on political and social power was under threat. After the ban on socialist parties was lifted in 1890, the Social Democratic Party emerged as a confident, assertive, and popular political force eager to assert its own cultural and political vision for a vital working class. This included the party positioning itself as the true inheritors of German classical literature and philosophy in order to counter an emerging mass culture. Because the bourgeoisie claimed cultural space as its own, the party could legitimately claim to be employing high culture as a way to reinforce its confrontation with the state and bourgeoisie, while also compensating for the lack of a strong working-class culture.² As we shall see, Brand and the GdE similarly accused the bourgeoisie of abandoning culture to moralizing impulses and utilized celebrated classical figures such as Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin to highlight the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German cult of romantic friendship. By extension the GdE, too, could frame its radical notions as the righteous actions of a group seeking to reclaim and protect German high culture.

Brand connected his defense of male eroticism to his understanding of a particular kind of anarchism that required control over the mind and the body through a complete self-determination. When the first issues of Der Eigene appeared in 1896, they were clearly inspired by the German philosopher Max Stirner (1806–56), active some fifty

² This is explored in greater detail in Frank Trommler, “Working-Class Culture and Modern Mass Culture before World War I,” New German Critique, no. 29 (April 1, 1983): 57–70.
years earlier. The title of the journal was prompted by Stirner’s main work published in 1844, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (typically translated as *The Ego and its Own*). Stirner strongly rejected any subordination of individuality, not only to religious and legal authorities, but also to morals, rationalism, and ideology. Likewise, Brand directed his bitter attacks not only against government authorities and Christian moralizers, but also against physicians and psychiatrists. Scientific research on human sexuality, Brand maintained, devalued the inherent beauty and sensuality of eroticism.

Titling the journal *Der Eigene* was also a play on the word’s multiple meanings, including the characteristic of self-ownership or self-possession, but also someone or something that is unique, peculiar, and distinctive. True to the spirit of these many connotations, *Der Eigene* attempted to offer a unique understanding of art, culture, and world history that would enable its readership to transcend the moral and social constraints of the era. Furthermore, its title functioned as a type of validation for a group of contributors who viewed themselves as part of a self-appointed cultural elite.

At the end of 1898, *Der Eigene* changed from an anarchist into a literary and artistic journal, “for all who hunger and thirst for a revival of Greek times and the rebirth of Hellenic standards of beauty after centuries of Christian barbarism.” In 1900, Brand discontinued publication of *Der Eigene* for three years due to lack of money, and then revived it again in 1903 as “a journal for male culture, art, and literature.” The magazine

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4 The most extensive examination of the journal’s evolution as a literary publication remains, Marita Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte: Literatur und Literaturkritik in den Anfängen der Schwulenbewegung am Beispiel des “Jahrbuchs für sexuelle Zwischenstufen”*
appeared regularly until 1906, when Brand became embroiled in the sensational Eulenburg Affair (1906–8). After a break of thirteen years, publication of Der Eigene resumed in 1919 and continued until 1932.

In the early days of Der Eigene, the painter and poet Élisàr von Kupffer (1872–1942) was particularly influential. As a response to the growing use of the term “homosexual,” Kupffer insisted on the usage of two alternatives: Lieblingminne and Freundesliebe. The first word, Lieblingminne, was coined by Kupffer to refer to pederastic relationships formed between men and boys in ancient Greece—a practice also termed “pedagogical eros.” Kupffer deliberately chose to include the term Minne to also evoke the medieval tradition of courtly love and the platonic admiration of balladeers praising their chosen beloved. The second word, Freundesliebe, originated in the late-eighteenth-century during the early years of the Romantic movement as a term for the love shared between friends. Both words were meant to counter the growing corpus of medicalized terminology applied to sexuality and desire, while simultaneously demonstrating the long and storied tradition of male homoeroticism.

In 1900, Brand’s small publishing company issued Kupffer’s anthology of homoerotic literature titled Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur (Lieblingminne and Freundesliebe in world literature). The book included an assemblage of Kupffer’s translations of poetry and short texts from ancient Greece and the Italian

Renaissance, selections that emphasized the tradition of mentoring adolescent males through intense emotional and sometimes physical relationships.

Kupffer’s most influential contribution was a polemical essay published as the introduction to the anthology. The essay, which was also excerpted in an 1899 issue of Der Eigene, served as both manifesto and rallying cry. Kupffer identified homoeroticism and pedagogical eros as the product of a convergence of a specific set of cultural and historical circumstances that afforded a maximum of personal liberty to men. He also sharply rebuked medicalized notions of sexuality, in particular those promoted by the Berlin physician and pioneering social reformer, Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935).

Hirschfeld was inspired by Darwinism and the study of embryology to posit that a variety of gender identities and sexualities might exist as remnants of the process of evolution. His theory of homosexuality was based on the existence of a proposed “third sex,” which occupied an intermediate biological and mental state between the male and female sexes. In 1897, Hirschfeld founded the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, or WhK) as an advocacy organization devoted to educating the broader public about homosexuality and to garner support for the elimination of Paragraph 175. But the androgynes, hermaphrodites, and transvestites examined in and associated with Hirschfeld’s work were perceived by the GdE to be genuinely sick individuals with no relation to their vaunted heights of pure masculinity. The GdE sought to supplant Hirschfeld’s numerous typologies—each of which had some

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degree of psychic and physiological expression of intermediate sexuality— with a conception of male sexuality that was fundamentally bisexual in orientation.

As this work details, Kupffer’s essay set the tone for future issues of the Der Eigene and inspired repeated, vituperative attacks on Hirschfeld and the WhK, as well as other early luminaries of sexual research. The emphasis on sexual behavior in scientific literature was abhorrent to Der Eigene contributors, who sought to distance male homoerotic relationships from sexuality and instead depicted male eroticism as an honorable practice more closely akin to chivalric traditions or fraternal orders. Consequently, Der Eigene sought to avoid the topic of sodomy and its implications for inciting swift social condemnation. Instead, its pages frequently offered animated defenses of accepted standards of public morality and inherited tradition. As a result, much of the published literature was resolutely anti-feminist, contemptuous of the women’s rights movement, frequently xenophobic, and increasingly anti-Semitic—genuinely held beliefs that also functioned as assurances to a skeptical reading public that the GdE still envisioned and would protect a recognizable social order.

When the visual material and literature published in Der Eigene are examined together, we have a nearly complete understanding of the group’s aspirations and the specifically cultural dimensions within which they were conceived: homoerotic relationships and imagery would serve as a route to the rediscovery of the transformative power of transcendent beauty. In turn, the group’s members hoped to help German culture achieve a state of grandeur and permanence. And despite their open disdain for the WhK, Brand and the GdE occasionally saw collaborative political possibilities with
Hirschfeld. The WhK’s 1897 petition to the Reichstag to eliminate Paragraph 175 was one such moment.⁶

*Der Eigene* contributors were hardly alone in their attempts to transform the general cultural and social direction of Germany. They belonged to a larger and distinctly German cultural tradition that denounced modern Western civilization—specifically French and Anglo-Saxon influences—as beholden to materialist concerns and threatened with cultural decadence and decay. While Hirschfeld’s work was indebted to the scientific traditions of the Enlightenment, Brand and his followers were demonstrably anti-rationalist and instead embraced the Romantic-era notion of *Kultur*: the promotion of aesthetic and spiritual values rooted in the German soul.

The GdE and WhK were also part of a much larger wave of artistic and social reform activity from 1895 to 1914. In particular, the men who joined Brand in espousing these ideas were proponents of a cult of youth and beauty as a path to cultural and social renewal. These interests overlapped with popular practices within the *Lebensreform* and youth movements, including open-air exercise, vegetarianism, homeopathic healing, nudism, and other efforts to promote a return to nature and more organic forms of community organization.⁷ Despite their very different origins, many of these reform

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⁶ Glenn Ramsey has argued that the period after the First World War offered another moment of fleeting collaborative possibility for the GdE and WhK under the aegis of the short-lived *Bund für Menschenrecht* (League for Human Rights, or BfM). As will be discussed in this work, I am skeptical that Brand or the GdE had the ability to successfully contribute to collaborative efforts after 1908. See Glenn Ramsey, “The Rites of Artgenossen: Contesting Homosexual Political Culture in Weimar Germany,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 1, Masculinity and Homosexuality in Germany and the German Colonies, 1880–1945 (January 2008): 85–109.

efforts centered on the physical transformation of individual bodies as a way to affect broader social and cultural change in the German body politic. As a result, these practices were also promoted in the pages of *Der Eigene* and underscored the extent to which members of the GdE endeavored to be active participants in the era’s popular discussions. A productive tension resulted for the GdE as it simultaneously strove to establish a new social order while seeking to be accepted as part of the dominant culture.

This emphasis on the body also corresponded with the era’s broader interest in shaping new human beings—a pursuit that also interested the burgeoning Zionist movement with its emphasis on creating the new Jew and the importance of self-sufficiency as embodied in the strong farmer. Max Nordau (1849–1923), the Zionist leader and physician published his most famous work, *Entartung* (Degeneration) in 1892 before co-founding the World Zionist Organization with Theodor Herzl in 1897. His book gave poetic voice and medical imprimatur to fears of social and bodily decay that had been steadily rising in Europe, and specifically in the German-speaking world, since the nineteenth century. With alarm, he examined such diverse social and cultural phenomena as rapid urbanization, the popularity of Nietzsche’s philosophy and its attendant irrationalism, as well as rising anti-Semitism—all were dangerous signs that society was reverting to a state prior to the Enlightenment and merited action. The perceived threat of degeneration and a desire to reverse cultural decay were profoundly

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motivating impulses for many groups, including the GdE, even though they revered Nietzsche and did not agree with Nordau’s larger Zionist project. Nonetheless, the prospect of social and cultural degeneration helps us to better situate and understand the GdE’s enthusiasms for depicting “German” bodies as well as pedagogical eros as responses meant to counter this threat.

The profusion of reform efforts prior to the First World War was made possible in part by the conclusion of the worldwide Great Depression (1873–1896) and strong economic growth aided by the availability of new gold supplies. But the recently concluded economic decline had been severe enough that, in the eyes of many average Germans, it helped to discredit the principles of economic liberalism and its most prominent representatives. As a result, the emergence of mass politics and a energetic press fostered not only new opportunities for engaging the public, but also could be used to inflame prejudices for political gain, as evidenced by the Dreyfus Affair in France (1894–1906) and the rise of anti-Semitism as a political movement.

The period of rapid economic growth following the downturn also corresponded to an explosion in the German book market, which greatly increased the potential audience size for the GdE and WhK’s texts. For Germany as a whole, the Adressbuch des Deutschen Buchhandels (Directory of German publishers and booksellers) listed 4,614 firms in 1875. That number more than doubled to 9,360 in 1900 and continued climbing so that it reached 12,412 firms by 1913. Similarly, the appearance of new titles grew from
nearly 18,000 in 1889 to 24,792 in 1900 and 34,871 by 1913, which marked Germany’s ascendency to the top of the global book-production market.⁹

Furthermore, both organizations benefited from the fact that an abundance of German literature related to sexuality and “inversion” was readily available, despite the existence of censorship laws. An early precedent had been set by an 1864 court case concerning a Leipzig publishing house’s issuance of activist pamphlets by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895), a lawyer who agitated against Saxony’s anti-sodomy law. Despite the avowedly political aims of the texts and their intended popular audience, a Saxon district court ruled in favor of the “scientific value” of the publications and allowed them to continue to be distributed.¹⁰ After 1890, scientific and popular texts on homosexuality were issued with relative ease and Magnus Hirschfeld counted 10,000 German-language publications released from 1898 to 1908.¹¹

In this environment, texts on sexuality that targeted an educated middle class could be particularly profitable. This was proven by the Leipzig publisher Max Spohr (1850–1905), who primarily specialized in small publications and pamphlets.¹² From 1883 to 1941, the Spohr Verlag published 528 titles and its catalog read like an index of

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¹⁰ This case and related precedents for the publication of material on homosexuality are discussed in Robert Beachy, “The German Invention of Homosexuality,” The Journal of Modern History 82, no. 4 (December 2010): 820–22.
¹¹ Magnus Hirschfeld, Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes (Berlin: Louis Marcus, 1914), 973.
the cultural and scientific ferment of the era. Spohr helped Hirschfeld found the WhK and subsequently issued all of the organization’s publications, including its profitable annual *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook for sexual intermediates), which appeared regularly between 1899 and 1923. Hirschfeld claimed that by 1914 more than 100,000 copies of WhK publications promoting “enlightenment” about the third sex had been distributed to groups including the press, government officials, physicians, professors, teachers, and religious leaders.\(^\text{13}\) While many of these were purchased directly by Hirschfeld through donations and were meant for free distribution, the potential size of the market and interest in the topic were still considerable.

By contrast, Brand’s publishing efforts were relatively modest and his business finances continuously teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. Exact circulation numbers are not available, but probably the number of *Der Eigene* subscribers never exceeded 1,500. In one of the few instances that numbers are available, 1,000 copies were listed for a 1905 edition of the journal.\(^\text{14}\)

Further complicating matters, Brand repeatedly ran afoul of Prussian censors, tangled with prominent individuals in libel trials, and recognized few boundaries, political or personal. Nothing incensed him more than the perception of hypocrisy. During the *Kaiserreich*, he cumulatively spent over three years in jail for various libel offenses and censorship violations. As will be discussed in the following chapters, he was an especially eager proponent of exposing political figures that he felt dissembled their

\(^{13}\) Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes*, 974.

\(^{14}\) *Der Eigene* 5, no. 1 (January 1905): 2
same-sex attractions—a practice we would now refer to as “outing.” The often naïve fervor with which Brand attacked others for perceived and actual hypocrisy culminated in his eager participation in the international press spectacle of the Eulenburg Affair.

During the First World War, Brand became especially enamored with nationalism and flirted with concepts of racial and ethnic purity. Without the financial resources to produce Der Eigene, Brand increasingly turned to photography and selling portfolios of his photographs of nude males with titles like Rasse und Schönheit (Race and Beauty) and Deutsche Rasse (German Race). When publication of Der Eigene resumed in 1919, he also began to occasionally include anti-Semitic screeds by other authors.

Little is known about Brand’s life in the period after publication of Der Eigene ceased in 1932 until his death in 1945. But according to the few available sources, he was repeatedly harassed by SA (Sturmabteilung) troops, but otherwise not detained nor imprisoned by authorities during the Third Reich. There is some evidence, which will be examined in the final chapter, that his ability to survive this period was thanks to the protection of a high-ranked Nazi official sympathetic to Brand’s work. Even so, he did not survive the war; Brand and his wife were killed during an Allied airstrike on February 26, 1945.

Brand’s few surviving letters and ephemera were collected by the historian Manfred Herzer and copies are now part of the collection of the Schwules Museum in Berlin. These materials, along with the small and selectively preserved collection of Kupffer’s letters and paintings housed at the Centro culturale e museo Elisarion in
Switzerland, were consulted in order to better contextualize and understand the material published by members of the GdE.

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Since the appearance of Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976), historians have produced a voluminous literature engaged with questions about the effects of language and labeling by medical and disciplinary authorities on identity formation.\(^{15}\) Over the course of more than four decades, the debates and challenges prompted by Foucault have inspired a rich collection of work on sexuality and identity construction, as well as examining social and conceptual transformations in understanding the agency of sexual actors in the past.\(^{16}\)

Historians vigorously examined Foucault’s assertion that the 1870 publication by German psychiatrist Carl Westphal (1833–90) of a paper on “contrary sexual feeling” marked a fundamental change in western understandings of deviancy.\(^{17}\) Subsequent research challenging, and inspired by, Foucault’s assumptions is of particular relevance to my own work. For instance, this body of research revealed that the term “homosexual”


was coined in a pamphlet published in 1869 by the Hungarian journalist Karl-Maria Kertbeny (1824–82). Kertbeny self-identified as a homosexual and he criticized the Prussian anti-sodomy statute, marking one of many instances in the development of a modern homosexual identity where the conversation was directed by a member of a marginalized population and, contra Foucault, not by medical professionals.

More productively, Foucault also challenged historians to examine the class roots of sexual behavior—representing “bourgeois” and “proletarian” sexuality as separate, distinct spheres linked by a power relationship mediated by medical professionals and other social authorities. German historians in the 1960s and 70s particularly embraced this challenge. Most notably, Klaus Theweleit’s landmark examination of right-wing sexuality identified sexual repression as a cause for the rise of fascism and argued that the Nazis inherited a culture of bourgeois restraint.

George Mosse later emphasized the importance of examining culture when researching sexuality. He argued that the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century rise of nationalism corresponded to a simultaneous interest in the rising middle class to emphasize respectability—a nationalist project which centered on sexuality and the

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human body.\(^\text{20}\) By primarily examining literature and iconography, Mosse stressed the significance of cultural forces—in concert with related political and economic factors—in shaping modern European history and contributing to the rise of fascism. Inquiries prompted by similar interests in culture have also allowed for a detailed understanding of the daily life and material culture of self-identified homosexuals living middle-class lives in Berlin and other large German cities.\(^\text{21}\)

More recently, historian Harry Oosterhuis has demonstrated the close collaboration between the pioneering psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing and his patients in establishing early understandings of sexual desire.\(^\text{22}\) In the course of this work, Oosterhuis has suggested that despite the numerous fruitful insights motivated by Foucault, it is important to not reduce sexuality to just medicalization; it is important to examine sexuality as “part of social reality.” Most relevant to my own work, Oosterhuis has proposed that sexuality can and must be viewed within the context of the rise of romantic love during the nineteenth century. “The argument that sexual identities are culturally shaped rather than rooted in biological or psychological essence does not mean that they are not more or less stable social realities. . . . Medical explanations of sexuality took shape at the same time as the experience of sexuality in society was transformed and


it became a subject for introspection and obsessive self-scrutiny in the bourgeois milieu."\(^23\)

Other histories have attempted to explore this bourgeois milieu through examinations of masculinity and its relationship to the era’s moral and heterosexual gender norms.\(^24\) This work has more recently expanded to include the perceived “war between the sexes” that coincided with a shift and separation of social spheres, as many male members of the educated middle-class moved from skilled work into professional and managerial positions.\(^25\)

Finally, the emergence of post-structuralism challenged the idea of fixed social spheres, but also opened the possibility to explore how categories such as class could cut across sexuality and enrich our understanding of debates on sex.\(^26\) Again, the amount of

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work is extensive, but Dagmar Herzog’s work on the history of European sexuality has especially widened that examination. Of importance, she has documented that sexual politics in twentieth-century Europe were highly ambivalent and subject to cyclical changes and continuities across numerous political regimes, rather than a narrative of gradual process.\(^{27}\)

This extensive body of scholarship, only briefly sketched here, has had a direct impact on how the GdE has been treated by historians.\(^{28}\) For instance, early histories were written with an eye to tracing political and social emancipation efforts.\(^{29}\) Consequently, they placed the GdE in opposition to the WhK, primarily on the basis of differing public outreach strategies and the GdE’s staunch rejection of scientific theory. Yet notably, these early works deliberately excluded or were dismissive of the era’s medical and scientific publications on sex and sexuality. Instead, a homosexual identity was assumed to be a historical constant existing prior to this explosion of medical discourse.

Alternatively, the early histories were often overly broad, situating homosexual practices


within general German political history over the course of centuries and with a primary interest in legal reform.\textsuperscript{30}

The GdE figured more prominently as historians responded to the appearance and challenge of Foucault’s work. Specifically, historians examined initial efforts to establish a canon of literature and literary criticism as deliberate acts of identity construction by a burgeoning and self-aware homosexual population in Wilhelmine Germany.\textsuperscript{31} In this context, historian Marita Keilson-Lauritz’s work was instrumental not only because she establishes an authoritative account of the publishing histories of both the GdE and WhK, but also because she establishes connections between the two organizations and highlights the number of men who published in both groups.

Keilson-Lauritz resisted placing Brand and Hirschfeld into strictly oppositional camps. She also challenged the notion advanced by historian Manfred Herzer that Brand’s increasing interest in right-wing ideology and his anti-Semitism were the root cause of his deep antipathy for Hirschfeld.\textsuperscript{32} She further cautioned that the complex nature of German history made it difficult to draw easy conclusions about the trajectory of their respective careers and approaches. To illustrate, she noted that Brand’s racism made it difficult, “if not impossible,” for him to be incorporated into a teleological

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item James W. Jones, \textit{“We of the Third Sex”: Literary Representations of Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany}, German Life and Civilization 7 (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); Keilson-Lauritz, \textit{Geschichte der Geschichte}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
narrative of homosexual emancipation. Furthermore, Hirschfeld’s biological determinism
could be linked theoretically to the eugenics practiced by the Nazis. But as she
emphasized, “This, too, is part of German history.”

Foucault’s call to examine the cultural origins of sexual identity also inspired
Oosterhuis. He selected almost two-dozen essays from Der Eigene to be translated into
English. With thematic introductory texts, Oosterhuis sought to explain how the GdE
contributed to and constructed an emerging homosexual identity. But his work’s primary
interest in constructionist approaches, elided how essentialist Brand and the GdE were in
their understanding and deployment of culture.

In establishing my own research practice and constructing a narrative, I am
indebted to these works. Building on their contributions, I attempt to illuminate how the
GdE’s literature and visual art provides greater insight into the complex anxieties and
cultural obsessions of the society from which the group emerged. Furthermore, because
so few of the GdE’s texts are translated into English—and because the GdE has often

33 The idea that Hirschfeld’s biological determinism can also be seen as an ideological forerunner
of fascism also appears in Volkmar Sigusch, “Albert Moll und Magnus Hirschfeld,” Zeitschrift
34 Keilson-Lauritz, Geschichte der Geschichte, 7–8; She revisits this debate and defends her
position in Marita Keilson-Lauritz, “Tanten, Kerle und Skandale: Die Geburt des ‘modernen
Homosexuellen’ aus den Flügelkämpfen der Emanzipation,” in Homosexualität und Staatsräson:
Männlichkeit, Homophobie und Politik in Deutschland 1900-1945, ed. Susanne zur Nieden,
Geschichte und Geschlechter 46 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005), 81–84.
35 Harry Oosterhuis, “Homosexual Resistance to Hirschfeld’s Homosexual Putsch: ‘The
Gemeinschaft Der Eigenen’, 1899-1914,” in Among Men, Among Women: Sociological and
Historical Recognition of Homosocial Arrangements (presented at the Gay-Studies and Women’s
Studies University of Amsterdam Conference, Oudemanhuispoort-Amsterdam, 1983), 305–14;
Harry Oosterhuis and Hubert Kennedy, eds., Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi
Germany: The Youth Movement, the Gay Movement, and Male Bonding before Hitler’s Rise:
Original Transcripts from Der Eigene, the First Gay Journal in the World, trans. Hubert
only been examined within general histories of homosexuality, thereby obscuring the complexities and contradictions in their own rhetoric—I have chosen to provide extensive translated quotes whenever possible.

The activities of *Der Eigene* contributors offer evidence that Foucault’s arguments about the importance of institutional structures in promoting and shaping expressions of sexuality do not hold true at the level of individuals. Rather than being cowed by the increasing popularity of psychiatric and scientific discourse on sexuality, many of the GdE members directly traced their engagement with issues of autonomy to those burgeoning medical discussions. More to the point, the very reluctance of Brand, Kupffer, and other GdE members to even use the term “homosexual” underscored the fissures and debates within the early movement to eliminate Paragraph 175.36 And while early contributors to *Der Eigene* would not deny the power of social structures to affect individual practice, they were nonetheless fervent believers in the power of their own agency to reverse that power dynamic. Conceived in an ideology of individual anarchism as a route to the liberation of desire, the GdE was resolute in its opposition, not just to Hirschfeld and sexologists, but also to bourgeois society.

This dissertation begins with an examination of the legal prohibitions against homosexual conduct and the opportunities for reform presented by the establishment of the German Imperial Criminal Code in 1871. The prohibition, in combination with the

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36 My writing has also been informed by the thoughtful analysis of Barry Reay on how to discuss friendship as a category of homosexuality. See Barry Reay, “Writing the Modern Histories of Homosexual England,” *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 1 (2009): see in particular 217–23; Reay’s commentary was influenced by David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), chap. 4.
relatively permissive publishing environment, were key factors in understanding why the
debate about male homosexuality was so prominent in Germany. By contrast, France’s
mild censorship laws and decriminalization of male same-sex relationships meant that
there was no central rallying point for the emergence of groups similar to the WhK and
GdE. There was a broad collection of French-language psychiatric and medical literature
on sexuality, but unlike the German case, its creation was not marked by the significant
participation of its subjects in defining and shaping its terms.

Similar to Germany, Britain maintained a strict anti-sodomy law, but there was no
tolerance for scientific publications on homosexuality, much less for discussions of legal
reform on the matter. The infamous trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895 was an instructive
demonstration of these attitudes and helped quash any further public discussion on
potential reform. By contrast, Wilhelmine Germany’s relatively permissive censorship
standards on sexual texts help account for the sheer volume of literature and debate on
marginal sexual practices.

With this in mind, chapter two examines the specific beliefs espoused by the GdE
in context with the more prominently discussed arguments made by Hirschfeld and the
WhK. The third chapter focuses on representative visual works produced by notable
members of the GdE and situates that work within the literary output of the group’s
members and German cultural and intellectual history concerning art and aesthetics. The
fourth chapter is devoted to Brand’s participation in the Eulenburg Affair and examines
how Brand’s activities at the periphery of society were nonetheless able to affect a major
political scandal and negatively shape public opinion. Most significantly, the press
depicted Brand, along with the “Jew” Hirschfeld, as dangerous, “modern” threats to established tradition and order. In the press coverage, Jews and homosexuals were conflated as schemers, intriguers, and shadowy operators, eager to exploit opportunity for personal gain and without regard for the impact on society at large. The final chapter evaluates the ultimate decline of the GdE, as well as Brand’s increasing interest in nationalist and right-wing radicalism prior to Der Eigene’s end in 1932.

Finally, a note is in order concerning history, historians, and changing attitudes toward sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Without doubt, gays, lesbians, transsexuals, and bisexuals in Germany—and much of the Western world—today can live much fuller, much less constrained, and certainly much less oppressed lives than in the Wilhelmine era. Indeed, the line tracing improvement in law and practices, as well as common attitudes, as measured from the last days of Bismarck to the present is a line of ascent and an upward moving example of progress. However the developments over those long decades were not an unbroken line of progress. Rather there were many fits and starts, with many a long plateau and more than few stunning reversals, most obviously during the Third Reich.

Nor are the prominent members of the GdE discussed here, and their allies who sought societal reform, devoid of deep flaws by any measure of character. Brand is a progressive manqué. He and the GdE tell us as much about the social limits accepted by some reformists as they tell us about an enlightened approach to laws and practices. As a result, examining the writing and artwork produced by members of the GdE can be a profoundly troubling experience.
For all that, Brand and the GdE are a major part of a necessary story—active during a moment of significant progress and potential for reform attained in Germany prior to the First World War. The GdE also offers insight into one particular approach to the idea of and quest for individuality—one that deliberately eschewed sexual practice as part of identity formation. Instead, the GdE chose to glorify eroticism and male same-sex attractions as a route to greater personal freedom, specifically in service to national achievement and cultural renewal. Brand and the members of the GdE need to be examined coolly and clearly, without a lot celebrating or condemning in order to understand pivotal figures at a pivotal time. Above all, historians of any culture must remind ourselves that “revolutions may go backward.”

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1. SETTING THE TERMS OF DEBATE:
MORALITY, SODOMY, AND SOCIAL WELFARE
IN WILHELMINE GERMANY

“Nature created only two genders, and the so-called ‘third sex’ is a filthy sickness, a result of a severe decadence.”38 So wrote members of the moral purity movement in an unsigned pamphlet distributed in Germany around 1900. They spoke for many conservative Germans at the turn of the century. There were many things that assailed the consciousness and the sensibilities of conservative Germans in that era, but few were more unsettling than homosexuality. Indeed, any suggestion of the homoerotic in art or other aesthetic expression was constantly an issue for censors and the general public alike. The more so because the era and the capital city of Berlin teemed with artists who were themselves homosexual and who were increasingly presenting the homoerotic in depictions of the body and discussions of the psyche.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, Germany already had an active and vibrant collection of conservative groups resisting any number of social changes, from the increasingly visible role of women outside of the home to groups seeking to limit public expressions of sexuality.39 All were organized and rallied around the banner of


39 See Volkswart: Organ des Verbandes der Männervereine zur Bekämpfung der öffentlichen Unsittlichkeit (The People’s Guardian: Voice of the Men’s Associations in the Struggle against Public Immorality), which began publication in 1908 and was the magazine of Catholic adherents of the moral purity movement. Or Deutscher Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation (German League to Combat Women’s Emancipation). Both are covered in John Fout, “Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia,”
morbidity and what have come to be seen by historians as the defining concerns of European morality discussions of the era: seeking to prevent the spread of prostitution, male homosexuality, and venereal disease. These may have been general European concerns, but it is the specific German response to moral issues related to homosexuality that will be addressed here.

Invoking concepts of morality was an unsurprising animating impulse for critics seeking to prevent any greater social acceptance or legal recognition of homosexuality. But concepts of morality were also of critical importance to some of the most prominent authors and participants in the early homosexual rights movement. Morality simultaneously served several important purposes for reformers. It allowed them to: highlight the perceived urgency for the need for reform; elevate novel value systems to a status where they could be accorded the same respect as other traditionally accepted moral values; assure a skeptical and conservative public that reform groups not only shared concerns about morality, but were eager to defend them.

**Matters of State**

The penal codes in several German states had slowly evolved during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries thanks to the contributions of Enlightened critics dedicated to reform as well as the significant influence of civil law reforms contained in the Napoleonic Code. Yet enforcing moral principles related to sexual acts, and sodomy in particular, were continued exceptions to those reform efforts. Even noted
German reformers such as Anselm Feuerbach (1775–1833) and Carl August Joseph Kleinschrod (1797–1866), who otherwise sought to de-emphasize the state’s role in enforcing moral principles, recognized sodomy as a particular vice and threat to fundamental social relations. Sodomy was conceived broadly as repeated pederasty, threatening society with the possibility of developmental consequences for younger boys and adolescents seduced through an introduction to “unnatural sex.”

As Feuerbach wrote in his textbook (Lehrbuch) first published in 1801, before he completed his model reform of the Bavarian penal code, some sexual acts should continue to be interpreted within a moral framework and be regulated by the state. Sodomy was a unique case due to, “The high degree of depravity [Verworfenheit], which this vice [Laster] requires; the disdain for marriage that it causes, which must have as a consequence the depopulation, weakening [Schwächen], and finally the dissolution of the state; finally, the physical and mental enervation, which makes the degenerate [einen so Entarteten] useless [unfähig] for the purposes of the state, [these] are the reasons that demand the police to forbid and punish these acts [that is, same-sex relations and bestiality].”

Feuerbach’s language and conceptual approach are reflective of what would

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become the standard discussion of sodomy during the nineteenth century and the main justification for criminalizing male homosexuality.

Because of Prussian resentment of nineteenth-century France, the Prussian penal code and the approach to punishing sodomy was relatively immune to any moderating influence provided by the existence of the Napoleonic Code. The Prussian Allgemeines Landrecht of 1794 had originally marked Prussia's arrival as an important reformer, including moving beyond the centuries-old European custom of punishing anal sex between males with a mandatory death sentence and instead requiring a prison sentence. But as rival European states revised or abolished their punishments for sodomy in the early nineteenth century, proposed revisions to the Prussian code began to reflect deep conflicts on the topic. These debates can be seen in the changing proposals and draft revisions debated between 1829 and the establishment of the Prussian Strafgesetzbuch of 1851. For instance, proposed revisions to the Prussian criminal code in 1833 and 1836 were primarily interested in preventing and punishing “unnatural gratifications of the sexual instinct” and sex with boys under the age of twelve.\footnote{Günther Gollner, Homosexualität: Ideologiekritik und Entmythologisierung einer Gesetzgebung, Schriftenreihe zur Rechtssoziologie und Rechtstatsachenforschung, Herausgegeben von Ernst E. Hirsch und Manfred Rehbinder 33 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), 163–65.} As the debate shifted from moral concerns to the importance of the state in promoting and protecting the stability of the family, male partners and animals were specifically enshrined in the 1851 law as
inappropriate sexual partners and such acts were punishable with a prison term of six months to four years and an immediate revocation of civil rights.\textsuperscript{43}

The creation of a draft criminal code for the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation in 1869 presented an opportunity for lawmakers to revisit and redefine penal strategies for the management of vice. Prussian state ministers debated as to whether to follow the example of several European states, including Belgium, France, and Bavaria, which had removed criminal punishments for sodomy.\textsuperscript{44} Significantly the debate included little mention of issues of morality and instead solicited opinions from medical experts, who were in favor of elimination of the paragraph.\textsuperscript{45}

Ultimately when the draft penal code was submitted in 1869, it retained a prohibition in deference to the public’s own sense of moral outrage. As the members of the Prussian Justice Ministry wrote in summary for retaining the prohibition,

\begin{quote}
Even if you could eliminate these penalties from the standpoint of medicine, or as justified by some theories of criminal law, the people's sense of justice [das Rechtsbewußtsein im Volke] judges these acts not only as vices, but as crimes. The legislature will have to discount these reservations in order to explain why these acts should go unpunished when they are fortunately considered by public opinion to be deserving of punishment. For such persons who have sinned in this manner against the laws of nature to escape judgment in the civil criminal laws and to be consigned to moral law, would undoubtedly be blamed as a legislative
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43} Strafgesetzbuch für die Preußischen Staaten und Gesetz über die Einführung desselben vom 14. April 1851 (Berlin: Nauck, 1851).

\textsuperscript{44} See in particular the recommendation put forth by Dr. Heinrich von Mühler (1813–1874), Prussian minister of religion, education, and medicine (Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinal-Angelgenheiten) published in Entwurf eines Strafgesetzbuches für den Norddeutschen Bund, Anlage 3: Erörterung strafrechtlicher Fragen aus dem Gebiete der gerichtlichen Medizin (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei Decker, 1869), 16.

mistake. The draft therefore does not follow the example of other jurisdictions where this [conduct] is allowed.46

The final code followed the prohibition established in the Prussian General State Laws of 1794 and almost exactly the wording of its most modern expression in the Prussian Penal Code of 1851.

The Penal Code of the North German Confederation became in large part the new Imperial Criminal Code that went into effect on January 1, 1872. Thus the specific prohibition against sexual acts between men was enshrined for the newly united empire as Paragraph 175:

Unnatural sexual acts, whether between persons of the male sex or by humans with animals, shall be punished by imprisonment; a loss of civil rights may also be imposed.47

Even if the state was no longer explicitly enforced religious ethics, the terms of debate for any effort to remove the prohibition would continue to reflect the ambivalence of lawmakers and society about how far the state should act to prevent and manage vice.

An Opportune Moment

In 1898 the first petition to the Reichstag was introduced calling for the repeal of Paragraph 175, which marked the first public parliamentary debate on homosexuality. It is also the same year that the world’s first homosexual journal, Der Eigene (The Self-Determined), began dedicating itself to a regular focus on male sexuality and cultural

superiority. The year marks an excellent point of departure to examine how not only differing concepts of morality were employed at the beginning of the homosexual emancipation movement, but also concepts of morality were essential to the movement's founders.

Berlin’s rapid industrialization and concomitant exploding population growth left police, and in particular vice squads, with an increasingly difficult task. By the late-nineteenth century, a few large German cities, including Berlin, had begun to relax enforcement of prohibitions against prostitution and homosexuality, or at the very least to create registries rather than immediately imprisoning offenders.

Those changing enforcement standards provided social reformers like Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) and his *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, or WhK) with a newly opened space and an opportune moment to argue for greater social acceptance of homosexuality. For another organization advocating for greater social acceptance of same sex love between males, the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (Society of the Self-Determined, or GdE) led by writer and general *enfant terrible* Adolf Brand (1874–1945), it was an opportunity to note the widespread decline of society’s moral standards and to fulminate against a litany of

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48 *Der Eigene* is a truly difficult phrase to properly translate into English. It not only connotes a sense of independent thought, self-ownership, and personal self-determination, but also indicates qualities of the particular, unique, and special.

perceived social ills. For both groups, the general chaos of the city and a rise in crime were points of emphasis that could in turn diminish any perceived threat from greater visibility of homosexuals.

Just what morality meant for early activists in the homosexual movement is as varied as the goals and origins of the groups themselves. And the term’s use highlights the fault lines separating groups while also illuminating that each had very different intended audiences, as well as fundamentally conflicting understandings of homosexuality itself.

**Hirschfeld and the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee**

Hirschfeld founded the WhK in Berlin on May 15, 1897 along with publisher Max Spohr, lawyer Eduard Oberg, and author Franz Joseph von Bülow. The organization was filled with social reformers acting with a crusader's zeal to educate and convert a broad public. It would ultimately grow to a membership of 500 with chapters active in twenty-five cities throughout Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands before its forced dissolution in 1933.

Reliably Social Democratic Berlin's many union halls and workers' organizations provided Hirschfeld with a consistent network to reach an ever-growing working class in need of enlightenment. Shuffling from union meeting to assemblies of tradesmen, he brought a wide-ranging lecture series covering everything from sexual disease to detailed descriptions of fetishes—always emphasizing that new scientific research proved that

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homosexuals, or the “third sex” as they were frequently termed in the growing scientific
discourse of the period, were creatures of nature worthy of sympathy, not condemnation.
For audience members it must have been titillating in both its graphic detail and its range
of topics, which were not normally discussed in polite company.

The veneer of scientific authority imbued the presentations with an air of
respectability and granted attendees a similar opportunity to publicly demonstrate their
modernity and enlightened curiosity—a sharp contrast to other social circles and class
levels where such discussions would have still been met with brusque dismissal as crassly
inappropriate. Introducing and exploring questions of sexuality and sexual conduct were
ways to engage with a potentially sceptical audience and introduce the idea that it was
society's moral duty to treat homosexuals with sympathy.

When it came time to present a petition to repeal Paragraph 175, Hirschfeld used
his connections to garner approximately 6,000 names including eminent public figures
including Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Gerhart Hauptmann, Frank Wedekind, and Rainer
Maria Rilke (all authors); the painter Max Liebermann; physicist Alfred Einstein; and the
leader and a founder of the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei
Deutschlands, SPD) in Germany, August Bebel.51 The petition itself abandoned any
explicit moral language in the introductory text. Aside from noting the statute's

51 Thomas Mann would later withdraw his name from the petition. Selected names are published
in “Petition an die gesetzgebenden Körperschaften des deutschen Reiches behufs Abänderung des
§175 des R.-St.-G.-B. und die sich daran anschliessenden Reichstags-Verhandlungen,” Jahrbuch
für sexuelle Zwischenstufen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität 2 (1900): 242–
65; See also the discussion in Charlotte Wolff, Magnus Hirschfeld: A Portrait of a Pioneer in
unintended consequence: an increasing rate of “highly reprehensible” male prostitution and blackmail.

The petition was sent to the Reichstag and Bundesrat in December 1897. It appealed to elected representatives to act in accordance with the standards of modern science and follow the jurisprudence of other European nations—France, Italy, and the Netherlands—none of which suffered ill effects after lifting their own bans on homosexual conduct. The petition gestured toward greater scientific understanding of homosexuality as an inborn condition and the support of the highest medical authorities in Germany and Austria for eliminating punishments. Additionally, the reader was assured that instances of anal sex amongst homosexuals were infrequent and no greater than those observed in heterosexuals. The final words of the introduction emphasized that while prohibitions against homosexual conduct should be abolished, they would be preserved for cases of assault, those involving children under sixteen years of age, and instances of public nuisance.52

The approach was mirrored when representative August Bebel discussed the petition on the floor of the Reichstag on January 13, 1898. The support of Bebel and the SPD was a significant achievement for Hirschfeld.53 The party garnered just over 23 percent of the popular vote, the largest percentage, during the most recent Reichstag election of 1893. But under the double-ballot majoritarian system used in Imperial

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52 “Petition behufs Abänderung des §175 des R.-St.-G.-B.,” 240–41.
Germany, many of the SPD candidates who won in the first round, then lost in the run-off to candidates from bourgeois parties. As a result, the SPD remained the fourth largest party in the Reichstag with only forty-four of the 397 total seats.\textsuperscript{54}

Bebel primarily argued that the statute fell into a category of laws that were of no benefit to the accused and in actuality created no social benefits, only fertile ground for extortion and blackmail. Furthermore, he estimated that homosexual activity was so pervasive as to make enforcing the law virtually impossible. He noted that the police in most cases only registered the names of offenders, rather than detaining them for extended periods in prison. Lastly, Bebel quipped that the reported number of registered offenders was so large and included people in all social circles and classes, that if it were enforced in full by the police, Berlin alone would need to construct two new prisons.\textsuperscript{55}

Three days later, on January 19, 1898, pastor Martin Schall a representative of the German Conservative Party (\textit{Deutschkonservative Partei}, DKP) registered his agitated protest during a speech in the Reichstag. The DKP had captured just shy of 14 percent of the vote during the last parliamentary election. But thanks to the empire’s run-off voting system, they held seventy-two seats and were the second largest party in the Reichstag.\textsuperscript{56} Schall vigorously protested any move to abolish criminal laws against sodomy and his

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\textsuperscript{54} “Gesamtergebnisse der Wahlen zum Reichstag.” \textit{Wahlen in Deutschland bis 1918}. http://www.wahlen-in-deutschland.de/krtw.htm
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages}, vol. 1, IX. Legislaturperiode, 5. Session (1897/98), 1898, 410 (January 13, 1898). Careless reporting by the press initially mangled Bebel’s intention and represented him as arguing for a strengthening of the existing law and a call for the police to better enforce it. See \textit{Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität} (Leipzig: Max Spohr, 1899), 275.
\textsuperscript{56} ‘Gesamtergebnisse der Wahlen zum Reichstag.’ \textit{Wahlen in Deutschland bis 1918}. http://www.wahlen-in-deutschland.de/krtw.htm
\end{flushleft}
comments would have resonated far beyond the party's core constituents of Prussian Junkers, nobility, and the Evangelical State Church of Prussia. Declaring himself to be both saddened and depressed by Bebel’s comments and the presence of so many names on the petition who claimed to uphold moral authority, when sodomy was declared by the Apostle Paul, in a letter to the Romans, to be one of the “worst sins and vices of the old paganism” [schlimmsten Versündigungen und Laster des alten Heidentums] and because of which “the old heathenism was deservedly destroyed.”

The petition was eventually submitted for review by a legislative committee exploring penal code reform and would then quietly disappear before Hirschfeld attempted to reintroduce a new petition in 1904 and then again in 1907 with no more success than this first attempt. But what the early debate in the Reichstag over Paragraph 175 did demonstrate is the degree to which politics were still understood in moral terms in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany, as well as the political status and meaning afforded to sexual behavior. Morality as discussed in a political context not only encompassed ethical concerns, but more broadly was recognized in the sense of something sittlich—desirable cultural conventions and customary behaviors, demonstrating propriety and purity.

In addition, the specter of sodomy and the unrepentant pederast would stalk any effort to repeal Paragraph 175—no matter how much reformers originally tried to simply avoid the topic. In particular, sodomy's legacy of social vilification and clerical condemnation made it an enduring symbol of social danger useful not only to blur the

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57 Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, 1898, 1:516 (January 19, 1898).
lines between society and state power, but also as uniquely unifying in its power to incite consistent, popular denunciation. Social critics and reformers alike acknowledged this reality.

**Calling on the Clergy**

For his part, Hirschfeld rapidly changed course and in his somewhat naïve style, which never lost faith in the positive benefits of an earnest examination of topics, decided to directly engage with religious leaders. He invited an author identified only as “a Protestant theologian” to write a short essay, “What position does the Christian church adopt toward same-sex love and its state punishment?”, for publication in the 1900 edition of the WhK’s *Jahrbuch*. Hirschfeld also began sending educational pamphlets and a survey to Catholic priests in southern German states.

The theologian, writing partly in reaction to Schall, embraced the WhK’s scientific orientation as his point of departure. The theologian cautioned that if state prohibitions of homosexual acts were based on Biblical injunctions, one must recognize that the Bible is fundamentally flawed from a scientific perspective. It could only serve as a guide for salvation. Even taking into consideration passages from the Old Testament prohibiting homosexual activity, the Bible was “not a revelation about normal and contrary feelings, perversions or perversities” and no more able to recognize the scientifically validated fact of the inborn nature of homosexuality than to acknowledge
that the world was not created in six days nor that the sun is the center of the universe.\textsuperscript{58}

In the theologian's view, there is no reason to question the fundamental moral purity of homosexuals as long as sexual activity is moderated:

Of course from the standpoint of pure morality, however—and, as such, every Protestant Christian church has to emphasize exemplary behavior, so they also may rightly regard dogmatics as paramount—homosexual intercourse between homosexuals must be considered exactly as heterosexual intercourse between heterosexuals. Therefore, as any normal sexual intercourse outside of marriage must be regarded as morally reprehensible, so also same-sex intercourse by \textit{Venus vulgivaga} [lat: wandering Venus; in this case, a synonym for a prostitute], even if it is based on an excessive physical sensitivity [\textit{Hyperästhesie}] to sexual instincts. Homosexual intercourse can therefore only be recognized by the Church as moral, if it is based on a deep-rooted attraction to another person of the same sex—but this must also be recognized as unprejudiced judgment. Yet if the church otherwise wants to honor the truth, every homosexual intercourse cannot be deemed as absolutely immoral in the long run, as long as it also remains the church’s duty, as for heterosexuals, to restrict and moderate homosexual instincts. And yes, if possible, through the institutional church to caution complete abstention and to encourage chastity within and outside the family.\textsuperscript{59}

In the same volume, Hirschfeld published a summary of responses he received in reply to a questionnaire he sent to Catholic leadership in Bavaria, Baden, and parts of the Rhineland.\textsuperscript{60} The second question of the survey, “Confirm that the homosexual inclination, as such, has nothing to do with the moral worth or unworthiness of people?,” captures some of Hirschfeld's relentlessly earnest faith in the benefit of engaging with

\textsuperscript{58} Ein evangelischer Theologe, “Welche Stellung hat die christliche Kirche zu der gleichgeschlechtlichen Liebe und ihrer staatlichen Bestrafung einzunehmen?,” \textit{Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität} 2 (1900): 209.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 209–10.

critics and supporters alike in a spirit of inquiry.\textsuperscript{61} Hirschfeld opened the questionnaire with a sympathetic appeal to the universal human failure to control urges and resist temptation:

Reverend, as you know, the state—while almost idle in addressing public immorality in general, so that, for example, by the time most young girls have barely finished school, they are vulnerable to acts of seduction—takes action in one case with the greatest severity and hardness: namely, in the case of homosexual acts between adult males. In this case, the state does not hesitate. So that a man who may have struggled mightily with all his strength to control his natural urges, might have succumbed during one unfortunate moment of weakness, and be exposed to all the horrors of a public branding as a disgrace, imprisoned, and have his entire future ruined.\textsuperscript{62}

Admittedly, Hirschfeld conceded that he got very few replies to his entreaty for discussion of experiences with homosexuals seeking pastoral guidance. He noted that most answered evasively or otherwise failed to return the questionnaire, a condition he attributed to the clergy’s fear of consequences.\textsuperscript{63} Nonetheless, Hirschfeld published twenty-five responses, many focusing on the parishioners they counseled in confession and expressing sympathy with their plight. Several affirmed that moral worth was independent of sexual orientation, but many stressed the importance of WhK not attempting to interfere with Catholic law or doctrine.\textsuperscript{64} One priest identified himself as homosexual and another proffered that bisexual impulses exist from the highest to the lowest rungs of society, “perhaps most of all within the clergy.”\textsuperscript{65} But perhaps this kind of moral inquiry missed its mark, because as Hirschfeld remarked, a not insignificant group

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 161–62.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 165–66.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 166–203.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 174.
of respondents were under the mistaken impression that the WhK sought not only to abolish Paragraph 175, but also to abolish the prohibition against adultery in the Ten Commandments.  

This willingness to engage with critics on their own terms left Hirschfeld open to charges that he was doing more to seek pity for homosexuals than actually educating the public to accept same-sex love. In particular this was a charge articulated by Benedict Friedlaender (1866–1908). A member of both the WhK and GdE, Friedlaender led a secession effort within the WhK in 1906—most likely prompted by the fact that he had been passed over for a leadership position—and established the *Sezession des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees* (known briefly later as the *Bund für männliche Kultur*, or Association for Masculine Culture), which was dissolved following his suicide in 1908. His critical writings highlight several philosophical differences with Hirschfeld, which range beyond a discussion of leadership principles. Among many criticisms, Friedlaender directly attacked Hirschfeld's willingness to engage in any dialogue with religious leaders on moral terms. Friedlaender argued, “The whole modern sexual freedom movement, of which the homosexual movement is only a part, proceeds, consciously or unconsciously, from a protest against the ascetic morality of the Middle

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66 Ibid., 164.
67 Benedict Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios. Die physiologische Freundschaft, ein normaler Grundtrieb des Menschen und eine Frage der männlichen Gesellschaftsfreiheit. In naturwissenschaftlicher, naturrechtlicher, kulturgeschichtlicher und sittenkritischer Beleuchtung*, 2nd ed. (Treptow-Berlin: Zack, 1908). Other criticisms are directed against Hirschfeld’s assumption that any attraction to males arises from a feminine impulse or is evidence of the soul’s hermaphroditism and the assumption that bisexuality is an extraordinary condition.
Furthermore, discussing sexual matters in large public forums was not only uncouth, it was misleading the public into thinking that same-sex love was primarily focused on sexual activity.

The Secession protests not only against the organizational and financial troubles of the old Committee, but also against its beggarly theory—a theory that is shabbily borrowed and is used to beg for pity. Although we too—to emphasize it immediately—neither make propaganda for same-sex love, at least not for its more material, sexual side, nor “glorify” it, but rather only want to research and spread the truth about it, we still intend to take a road that is more direct, perhaps somewhat steeper, but at any rate shorter than that of the old Committee. And since this is in part a matter of temperament, it has already been shown and will in the future more clearly appear that our conception can from the beginning count on sympathy in the circles of the more virile friends of male youth—no matter whether they have “sexual” intercourse or not, since that is for the unbiased a relatively secondary matter and at any rate a purely private affair; whereas the extremely feminine “homosexuals” will, on the whole, feel more comfortable in Hirschfeld’s camp.

Despite such criticism, Hirschfeld was unwavering in his desire to engage with as many people as possible, and as ever, with the working class. Hirschfeld starts from the assumption that there would always be a given set of homosexuals in society, independent of culture and moral values. This fact needed to be spread as far and wide as possible, preferably in the most progressive and forward-thinking environments possible.

**Out of the Proletarian Darkness**

In seeking public forums to present his research, Hirschfeld was always particularly proud of his work with unions. An interest in improving the lives and health

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69 Ibid., 72.
of workers began early for Hirschfeld during his days as a medical student and young doctor examining alcohol consumption and abuse in Berlin. Those research interests led him to extensively explore Berlin's bar scene. There he encountered a host of characters, from the working class and beyond—avowed homosexuals, fearless transsexuals, and unashamed male prostitutes—who would animate new research passions and lead to the establishment of the modern field of sexology. This menagerie also confirmed for Hirschfeld that social rejection was a primary cause of excessive drinking.  

Around 1900, Berlin's population of over 1.8 million people drank more than 7 billion liters of beer, a similar amount of Schnaps, and 300 million liters of wine, according to Hirschfeld’s own calculations. But as Der abstinent Arbeiter (The abstinent worker) newspaper declared, “a victory over capitalism begins with a victory over one's self.” In this context, Hirschfeld had shown himself as an avid promoter of moderate alcohol consumption. Yet in 1902, Germany had only ten small abstinence groups with a specific focus on workers. At the Easter meeting of the 1903 International Anti-Alcohol Congress in Bremen, Social Democrats called for the establishment of the Deutsche Arbeiter-Abstinenten-Bund (German Workers’ Association of Abstainers, or

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DAAB. In May of the same year, the group was formally incorporated with 196 members. Two years later the group had a predominantly male membership of 1,300 and grew into one of the most prominently active abstinence groups. By 1912, 200,000 Germans were involved in abstinence groups, of which about 2,500 were members in the DAAB. Without doubt, the DAAB was on the smaller end of groups operating in Germany, but its affiliation with the Social Democratic Party made it particularly influential with Berlin's large working class. As a result, Hirschfeld was heavily involved in its activities.

The DAAB’s biweekly newspaper, Der abstinente Arbeiter, was edited by the same editorial team as the prominent Social Democratic paper, Vorwärts. An author only identified as “P.R.” summarized the paper and the group's shared mission in October 1903, “With a little good will we have the ability, to elevate ourselves out of the proletarian darkness and to look into the distance to the light of freedom, the victory of the workers’ cause.” This was an ethos embraced by Hirschfeld and leading workers out of the proletarian darkness would by necessity include examining issues of sexuality and

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73 By comparison, the International Order of Good Templars already had 26,000 registered members worldwide in 1903. See: Cordula Hölzer, Die Antialkoholbewegung in den deutschsprachigen Ländern (1860–1930), Europäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe 3, Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften 376 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1988), 77.
74 Hübner, Zwischen Alkohol und Abstinenz: Trinksitten und Alkoholfrage im deutschen Proletariat bis 1914, 183.
75 For comparison, membership numbers in 1912 for abstinence organizations active in Germany with more than 1,000 members: Deutscher Hauptverein vom ‘Blauen Kreuz’: 38,000; Deutscher Bund evangelischer-kirchlicher Blaukreuz-Verbände: 9,400; Freier Bund vom Blauen Kreuz: 3,400; Kreuzbündnis, Verein abstinenter Katholiken: 26,000; Deutscher Arbeiter-Abstinentenbund (sozialdemokratisch): 2,650; Deutscher Bund abstinenter Frauen: 2,030; Deutscher Alkoholgegnerbund: 1,000; Polnischer Abstinentenverein: 4,184. In Otto Koch, “Alkoholfrage,” Druckschrift des Kreuzbundes, 1912, 3 edition, 226.
76 P.R., “Intoleranz,” Der abstinente Arbeiter, no. 3 (October 15, 1903): 11.
connecting them with tangible and relevant improvements in the lives of workers.

In a speech originally delivered during Christmas 1903 and New Year’s 1904 to a packed auditorium at the Ausstellung für Arbeiterwohlfahrt zu Charlottenburg (Exhibition for Workers’ Welfare in Charlottenburg), Hirschfeld cautioned, “Again, only knowledge of the truth and a more intimate connection with nature can create change. ‘What is natural, cannot be immoral,’ says Friedrich Nietzsche quite rightly.”

Hirschfeld’s quotation of Nietzsche served as an invitation to the audience to consider the social reprobation experienced by others and the moral responsibility to prevent such mistreatment.

While outlining the social dangers and consequences of drinking, Hirschfeld offered as a cautionary example the ease with which women are seduced with alcohol—enumerating the resulting illegitimate children, spread of sexually transmitted infections, and growing ranks of prostitutes. A quote from Schiller—“This is the curse of every evil deed, that it bears still more evil”—was used to introduce a description of the stillborn and sickly infants produced as the result of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. A special disdain was reserved for fathers who plied their daughters with drink and then introduced them into prostitution. Within this litany of cautionary tales, Hirschfeld

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77 Hirschfeld, Alkohol und Geschlechtsleben, 2–3.
78 To better understand the context in which Hirschfeld is writing, the back cover of this pamphlet advertises additional brochures and publications from the DAAB, in addition to an emphasis on the effects of alcohol on families and children, the list also notably contains appeals for abstinence focused on race and sexuality: Dr. med. Fock, Alkohol und Rassenhygiene; Prof. A. Forel, Alkohol und Geistesstörungen, Alkohol, Vererbung und Sexualleben, Sexuelle Ethik, Die sexuelle Frage. Also of interest: Emil Vandervelde, Alkoholismus und soziale Frage, Alkohol, Kunst, und Religion.
79 Hirschfeld, Alkohol und Geschlechtsleben, 7–10.
declaimed,

Alcohol even plays a fateful role in those with a differently oriented sex drive, the so-called homosexuality, which modern research has shown is not a crime nor a vice, but an inborn quality and part of one’s entire physical being. It clouds decision-making, lowers self-control, and too often drives people into the arms of blackmailers. I have acted as an expert witness in many such cases where alcohol consumption is primarily responsible for homosexuals getting into the worst situations, where not infrequently they felt only suicide could save them.80

As a coda, Hirschfeld offered the story of a man who drank too much and was seduced by a handsome stranger, had his belongings stolen, and when he yelled for help from the police was arrested along with the thief for violating Paragraph 175.

Even if alcohol was not the expressed theme, the admonition to the listening audience to act with greater sympathy and care toward homosexuals was always present. In 1903, the same year as his first speeches for the DAAB, Hirschfeld delivered a lecture titled “What Should People Know about the Third Sex?” to the Berlin Brick Masons’ Union. An unsigned pamphlet of the same name had been issued by Leipzig’s Max Spohr publishing house in 1901 and included an abridged version of the 1897 petition to the Reichstag.81 By 1903, the increasing distribution of the pamphlet was the single largest achievement of the WhK, aside from its continued efforts to petition the Reichstag for the abolition of Paragraph 175. In 1904 Hirschfeld reported that the pamphlet had just been published in its nineteenth edition.82

The constant work with unions, the informational pamphlets, and the speeches to

80 Ibid., 9.
anti-alcohol groups represent Hirschfeld’s avid belief in the powers of education and society's ability to transform itself. In approach, the WhK and Hirschfeld were for the most part open to continually changing strategy, constantly searching for new avenues of popular support, and willing to engage in any almost topic of discussion if it could bring more people to support the group's reform goals. Almost all of these characteristics would be repudiated or markedly disputed in both content and approach by the GdE.

**Moral Men versus an Immoral Society**

For the GdE, with its roots in anarchist rebellion, moral strictures were the detritus of the Church's authority, a smothering impediment to humanity's evolution and a threat to the modernizing efforts of a young German nation. Also for the GdE, the increasing public prevalence and discussion of emotional and sexual attraction between males was a positive social manifestation resulting from the convergence of a specific set of cultural and historical circumstances. Indeed according to many members, a limited number of historical moments existed where society had afforded men the freedom—and young men in particular—with the opportunity to participate in homosocial bonding and homoerotic acts. Modern Germany was fortunate enough to exist in such a new flowering, but all due care had to be taken to promote and preserve this fragile moment.

By examining the persistence of outmoded moral strictures, Brand and other prominent contributors to Der Eigene vociferously attacked the authority of religious leaders and railed against a society that inhibited personal choice and freedom. The liberation philosophy of Max Stirner (1806–56)—and in particular his book Der Einzige und sein Eigentum (typically translated as The Ego and its Own; 1844), from which the
organization also took inspiration for its name—and the cultural criticism of Nietzsche formed the dual inspirations for the GdE’s activities.\(^3\) It is therefore often surprising to see how often morality is invoked in the journal’s pages.

But the GdE were elitist and aristocratic in orientation. No matter how fervently they attacked society’s propensity for condemnation and judgment, the existing social order as a whole had to be preserved, if not strengthened. The result of these conflicting impulses is that GdE texts often contain a second appeal to the reader that functions more like a reassurance: we seek radical change in so far as advocating for greater personal freedom, but there are defined limits. Those limits would hearken back to some of the earlier ambivalence reflected in debates about revising Prussia’s criminal code: placing a premium on the family as guarantor of social stability, denouncing masturbation and wanton sexual activity, and invoking repeatedly the importance of safeguarding the population’s general health and vitality.

One of the loudest ways of reassurance was the “clarification”—repeated statements that the complete elimination of Paragraph 175 was of secondary concern. The implicit, and occasionally explicitly stated, result of this reassurance was that GdE members were not interested in sexual acts \textit{per se}, but in personal freedom for an

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educated, cultural elite to act without social reproach or the persistent threat of blackmail fostered by Paragraph 175’s existence. In other words, the GdE wanted there to be no mistaking them for common pederasts. Or as GdE member Edwin Bab (1882–1912) wrote in the pages of Der Eigene in 1903, “As little as a love poem can be a glorification of sexual intercourse, just as little can Der Eigene be a glorification of ‘unnatural lewdness.’”

Adolf Brand first provided a programmatic outline of the GdE’s aspirations and goals in the second volume of Der Eigene in 1898. Those goals would remain remarkably constant throughout the life of the organization. So much so that an examination of a rare copy of the group’s bylaws from 1925 reveals much clarification and added prose, but little had altered in principle since the original formulation. A cursory examination of the bylaw’s subheadings gathered under the title “What we want,” reads like a catalog of the era’s social debates: sexual culture, bisexuality, nudism, masturbation, women’s fragile honor, mass democracy, marriage, and prostitution. But it is from the beginning expressed in moral terms,

The GdE views friendship with youths to be the surest and only way, as well as the proven and reliable method, to eliminate the horrors of prostitution and to finally escape from the sexual squalor of our time. . . . The GdE even pursues the goal of cultivating intimate acts of friendship [intimen Freundschaftsdienste] that benefit public welfare and these close connections must become the responsibility of school and state. These first proofs of friendship of boys and youths with each other must be promoted in every respect because they are the initial proud stages

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86 Brand, GdE Satzung.
of awakening manhood to the quiet sanctuary of true love [stille Heiligtume echter Liebe].

The section on abolishing state policing of moral behavior (Abschaffung der Gesetze) makes the limited role of social moral standards clear. “The GdE shows that the mendacity [Verlogenheit] of the state and the hypocrisy of the Spießbürger are our greatest enemies because they would brand as vices the most harmless and highest pleasures of life: the joy of people in one another [die Freude des Menschen am Menschen]. And because precisely it is they who have no reverence for love’s wonders and blessed secrecies.”

The political goals are clearly outlined: repeal Paragraph 175 because it only leads to male prostitution and blackmail and is a misuse of state power against the personal rights of individuals. Eliminate Paragraph 184 because neither the state nor church should make censorship decisions on behalf of adults. And finally, remove Paragraph 218 and its prohibition on abortion, because it is a woman’s right to choose what she will do with her body. But with such a litany of reform proposals, Brand ends with demonstrated restraint: “Every sexual excess and every sexual debauchery is naturally to be discouraged. They are at the minimum unattractive, or sins, as the Church says. But as long as through such sins a third party is not harmed, the state has no right to intervene with fines or imprisonment.”

It is a striking irony that at the height of its denunciations, there is always a

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87 Ibid., 11–12.
88 Ibid., 20.
89 Ibid., 20–21.
measure of distance and reserve in the tone of the GdE’s bylaws. It is accompanied by a pronounced disdain for the perceived messiness of compromise and argumentation that occurs in popular politics. Instead, the bylaws insisted that change can be effected by acting “through quiet acts [stilles Wirken] from person to person similar to the style of the Free Masons.”

Adding to the sense of exclusivity actively promoted by the organization, the bylaws were mailed with a note stating that “a good friend of our cause” had recommended the recipient to be “enlightened” about the organization’s purpose and inviting the recipient to fill out and return a response card for evaluation. The back pages included a list of founders and contributors, while offering two levels of membership: a Circle of the Free [Ring der Freien] and a Circle of the Faithful [Ring der Treuen]. Membership in the latter not only required a larger annual donation, but also acceptance was conditional and “far more an honor” (with emphasis in the original) in recognition of a social position and speaks to a member’s preparedness to stand in defense of the ideals of the GdE. There was no appeal in cases of rejection.

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90 Ibid., 22. It should be noted that Brand himself did not shy away from public attention and, indeed, notoriety. His very public involvement in the multiple trials related to the Eulenburg Affair (1906–8) and Brand’s publication of a pamphlet alleging a homosexual relationship between then chancellor Bernhard von Bülow and privy councilor Max Scheefer. Brought to court on criminal libel charges, Brand was sentenced to and served eighteen months in prison. He had already served a three-month prison sentence in 1905 for publishing “lewd writings” in Der Eigene. And notably had served a year in prison in 1899 for striking Ernst Lieber, a member of the Reichstag and head of the Catholic Center Party, across the face with a dog whip.

91 Ibid., 1.

92 Ibid., 24–26. Admission into the Circle of the Free cost sixty marks, and the Faithful cost thirty-six. Both levels included subscriptions to Der Eigene and the supplement “Race and Beauty,” which typically featured in each issue six nude photographs by Brand of young men. Membership at either level also included the right to attend weekly meetings at Brand’s
whether through lack of interest, or truly exclusionary admission practices, the contributors’ role of all contributions made since 1897 only reached 104 by 1925.  

The GdE was literary in aspiration and tone, but Élisàr von Kupffer’s early essay “Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Welititeratur” (Lieblingminne and Freundesliebe in world literature), published in 1899, became a touchstone for the all-encompassing cultural ambitions of the organization. Furthermore, Kupffer, with his aristocratic Baltic origins, was the very personification of the organization’s self-image as a rarified, noble retreat. The essay’s tone is strident, the words are urgent, and the author is indignant at the efforts of science to classify human sexuality.

It is now fashionable in human-scientific and related circles, to speak of a ‘third’ sex whose soul and body are supposedly not in harmony. The Hanoverian lawyer K.H. Ulrichs, a courageous and honorable character, but not exactly the most prudent, has invented a word for the third sex, to which he counted himself as a member: ‘Uming’ (from Venus Urania), and ‘urnish.’ This term has spread like a generalized epidemic. On the scientific side it has been adopted by the well-known psychiatrist Professor Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing in Vienna. The topic is examined, nit-picked, classified, hypno-mediated, popularized, and God knows

Wilhelmshagen apartment of the members’ round table (Tafelrunde) and free legal counsel in cases of blackmail or prosecution related to Paragraph 175.  

93 Ibid., 35–36.


Kupffer’s essay was not just a clarion call and rallying cry, it was a pointed distillation of a world-view that was remarkably persistent and established a clear set of cultural priorities that would come to dominate one side of the debate for homosexual emancipation for several decades. Indeed, other authors repeated certain key phrases by Kupffer throughout the press run of Der Eigene. As such, it is worth quoting the opening lines in detail because it so clearly distills the complaints and concerns of the GdE.

Unfortunately, we live in a time so unmanly that any advocacy for male rights, to say nothing of privileges, is perceived to be and criticized as an outmoded blasphemy against female ascendancy (Vorherrschaft). So that the above sentence is not merely a phrase, it is necessary to address somewhat the word ‘male’ and, strange as it is, to start reclaiming it (aufräumenden Verneinung). . . .

To be male/masculine does not mean: to be equipped with certain superficial features or to be bereft of any sense of masculine beauty; it also does not mean: to be in every way more brutish and to have greater stamina than the woman and to put his strength in the service of women, to protect them from danger and meet their sexual demands. No. To be male means: to fight with his life, using all of his powers together for a flourishing life and should there be hazards/challenges to withstand them. Masculinity means preserving self-determination, respecting personal freedom and safeguarding the common good, and the latter encompasses all and everything. When the man entered into the almost exclusive service of the woman and her taste, he lost his manliness and retained only a pale imitation. The woman has achieved personal rights, even in the legal realm. Fine, she may do that, as far as her personal strengths allow. But it is also time that the man should look at himself, and, as odd as it sounds, in the face of the emancipation and individuation of the woman, we need an emancipation of the man to revive a male culture, and it is for that I advocate

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96 Kupffer, Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur, 3. For an excellent example of a purported scientific examination of the question of the disharmony between soul and body in homosexuals, see: Magnus Hirschfeld, “Ist die Homosexualität körperlich oder seelisch bedingt?,” Münchner Medizinische Wochenschrift, no. 11 (1918): 295–300.
97 For instance, see reference to Kupffer’s phrase and emphasis upon “männliche Kultur” on the title page of the following issues of Der Eigene: 4 (1903) no. 4; 8 (1920) no. 1; 9 (1921) nos. 1-12; 10 (1924) no. 4; 11 (1927) no. 5; 12 (1929) no. 3; 13 (1931) no. 7.
In Kupffer’s view, men who are physically or emotionally attracted to other men have been set upon by a misguided medical establishment, labeled weak and effeminate, and left to beg for the mercy of lawmakers and judges alike. In such a context, “It has become well-nigh a moral duty, in all of this confused talk of sickness and into this swamp of lies and obscenities, to allow a ray of sunlight to fall from the reality of our historical development.”

In many ways, Kupffer’s advocacy for a world that values male relationships with the same respect and validity as heterosexual relationships cannot be separated from a view on arts and culture, morality, and personal freedom. In particular, the arts are depicted as endowed with transformative power, but more to the point, as markers of a society and culture where male self-determination and camaraderie are unhindered by social constraints and allowed to flourish. This, in turn, is linked with the essential notion that masculinity itself holds a privileged role in society and is also a marker of a society and culture prepared to act with decisive confidence. Any diminishing of male prerogative is a cause for alarm and furthermore a threat to the functioning of state and society.

For all of its hatred of medieval moral values, the era itself—and knights in particular—are an inspiration for the GdE’s heroic conception of masculine virtues and

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98 Kupffer, *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur*, 1. In an attempt to persuade the reader that he is not as indifferent to the plight of women as it may seem, he implored the reader to examine his early poems to see that he is really “no enemy of female virtues, grace and charm,” see 2-3.
99 Ibid., 3–4.
an idealized conception of romantic love. In naming his anthology, Kupffer took *Freundesliebe* (love between friends) and paired it with a new creation of his own, *Lieblingminne*. Kupffer coined the term by taking the older Middle High German word for love, *Minne*—which continues to evoke courtly love in modern usage. *Minnesänger* were similar to troubadors in France and wrote love poems in the courtly love tradition in Middle High German in the High Middle Ages. Out of this historical context, Kupffer created *Lieblingminne*: the love and affection for a close friend or beloved, understood to be of the same sex as the admirer and potentially involved in a pederastic relationship with him. Kupffer’s creation was also inspired from another older, but infrequently used term, *Frauenminne*—the platonic love and courtship of women through lyric poetry and song.

Brand consciously used similar language in constructing the membership materials for the GdE. Meetings were termed “round tables” and at several points he seeks to construct or purchase a medieval-style monastery.100 These were places to recall a supposedly lost male world and to assure potential critics and members alike that they are part of an established, venerated cultural tradition.101 A positive moral tradition is equated with masculine privilege and masculinity is the force to save a deteriorating.

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101 Interestingly, the only woman—a “Frau Reg.-Rat Dr. Martha Marquardt”—listed on the membership list rolls of the GdE also appears as a member of the WhK. She is most likely the wife of Dr. Wilhelm Marquardt, who worked as a Regierungsrat (senior civil servant) beginning in 1897. He then became a Geheime Regierungsrat (privy councillor) after 1908. As his wife, she was entitled to honorifically use his academic and civil service titles. Brand listed her as one of the twelve founding members of the GdE. Otherwise no other information is known about her. See discussion in Herzer, * Magnus Hirschfeld: Leben und Werk*, 14.
dithering, and distracted world. As Kupffer wrote:

We live, as ever, in a world of catch phrases that do not demand much thought. One hears of decadence and degeneration [Verfall] and then uses it without first questioning the meaning of the words. What are we calling degeneration? The death of vitality, the inability to carry on through life’s struggles, the longing for closure, decomposition. Only in these conditions should we speak of degeneration. And yet there are certain people, without mentioning any names, that say Lieblingminne is a sign of degeneration. Why? — — Did Sophocles not honorably fulfill his position in life? Did he not act culturally, indeed morally? Did Alexander the Great shy away from life’s struggles? Even if each of those claims is a historical falsehood, Lieblingminne can be found in even the earliest days of human history. 102

Later he goes on, “Any sensible and thinking man must ask himself: Can it be a coincidence that so many excellent representatives of our cultural history have maintained this inclination [Neigung] and love affairs [Liebesverhältnisse]? Or at least, if they were caught up in the delusions of their own time, were dominated by this disposition?”103

In one sense, Kupffer is setting himself up as someone who can hardly be reproached for his homosexual attractions. He has established his rhetorical bona fides as defender of the state, guardian of the people’s best interests, preserver and promoter of cultural heritage, and guarantor of the Reich’s strength through the pursuit of one’s personal attractions. And lest there be any doubt of his allegiances, he assures the reader, If it can be shown, in fact, to be the case that Lieblingminne (and love between friends [Freundesliebe]) are more harmful than the usual love of women [Frauenminne] to the state, health, morality — if both cannot be maintained — I would be the first to advocate for their restriction. Certainly, the state exists for the sake of the people, not the other way around. But we need the state, because in spite of all humanity — homo homini lupus [man is a wolf to his fellow man] — it is

102 Kupffer, Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur, 4–5.
103 Ibid., 7.
the individual in a struggle against everyone else. This is nothing to whine about, because that is how it is in nature. Therefore, the state and its healthy prosperity is a natural necessity. So we only want to support what promotes and enables health and strength. And precisely because, and only because, I believe the close relationship from one man to another, from man to a youth, and from youth to youth is a strong element of state and culture, have I undertaken this difficult work in the interest of public welfare and personal development. ¹⁰⁴

And it is in this spirit that Kupffer relegates the task of repealing Paragraph 175 to secondary status, at best. Again, this may be taken as a strategy deliberately chosen on the part of Kupffer to not alienate potential converts to his point of view by potentially clouding the issue. But it is important to remember that Kupffer and the GdE at large did not maintain the same hunger for public acceptance that is evidenced by Hirschfeld’s more tactfully phrased and frequently elliptical writings. Kupffer is nonetheless keenly aware of society’s structures and strictures, but interested primarily in reorganizing society in the image of his own ideals. It is therefore important to not view Kupffer and the GdE as in dialogue with Hirschfeld but standing—by choice—separate and apart from his efforts.

Certainly Hirschfeld makes for a convenient target of attack and is a repeatedly cited by explicit and implicit mention, but that has less to do with any real interest in his efforts and much more to do with the fact that Hirschfeld’s approach and very worldview are at such odds with the general conception of society presented by Kupffer, Brand, and the GdE. There is a moral imperative and call to action but it is for the restoration of masculine virtues. In this sense, Der Eigene’s content and message hardly evolved over its intermittently issued thirteen volumes; it is a space for realizing this world through

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
photography and illustrated work, in poetry and in short stories. Political debates and the existence of Paragraph 175 are unwelcome intrusions and reminders of the existence of an oppositional worldview and warrant repeated denunciation in strongly worded essays, but otherwise the content of Der Eigene is remarkably disengaged from outside influence. The result is that an issue from 1899 can read and appear to be almost identical in tone and content to an issue published in 1925.

The contributors to Der Eigene were conscious of attempting to break free from the present society. They were less interested in directly opposing doctors—although psychiatrists and sexologists were hated and despised in equal measure—and pandering to politicians, as they were in espousing and propagating a conception of society that was male-oriented, nationalistic, and aristocratic in orientation. Doctors, lawmakers, and a stubborn Mittelstand merely stood in the way. But the GdE understood that their vision of a society rededicated to venerating relationships between men, whether erotic or platonic, contained implicit social threats. In particular, the potential abdication of the male role in procreation and the specter of unrestrained individualism. To counter such perspectives they would nonetheless strive in their writings and artistic production to address those fears.
2. THE GEMEINSCHAFT DER EIGENEN:
HARBINGERS OF A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

By 1903, the essays and art published in Der Eigene—encompassing a total of eighteen issues since 1896—articulated a comprehensive and cohesive vision of a new masculinity, and ultimately a new society organized around affording men as much personal choice as possible. During the same year, Adolf Brand and Wilhelm Jansen (1866–1943) founded the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen to realize this agenda. Specifically, the activities, visual material, and published writings of the GdE’s principal members focused on three aspects: the sacralization of manhood; the superior aesthetics of male beauty; and the recognition of same-sex relationships and intimate male friendships as natural, universal expressions of love.

In contrast to Hirschfeld, GdE members were less interested in pursuing equal rights for homosexuals.105 In fact, they staunchly rejected any suggestion that same-sex attractions or an appreciation for the male form were related to homosexuality or sexual preference. As GdE member Edwin Bab emphasized, the elimination of prejudice against homosexuals was merely a first stage in the broader effort to change society’s perception of male relations. “The GdE also seeks repeal of 175, but not as a main goal. Male relationships need not always lead to sexual acts as punished by Para. 175. Rather, the criminalizing of these acts prevents general social acceptance of male-male

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105 Friedlaender, “Denkschrift der Sezession,” 76, 83; Edwin Bab, Die gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe (Lieblingminne): Ein Wort über ihr Wesen und ihre Bedeutung (Berlin: Verlag Hugo Schildberger, 1903), 60.
Greater social acceptance of emotional and physical intimacy between men was seen as critical to advancing German society and culture forward into a new era of enlightened personal freedom.

An anonymous author writing under the name Gotamo in a 1903 issue of *Der Eigene* speculated about what such a newly enlightened society might look like. Considering the repeal of Paragraph 175, he wrote:

> But when we have attained that goal, oh then, upwards! Upwards! A new day draws up to new shores! Unimaginable, immeasurable cultural perspectives open up to us and we already see the clear, sunny civilization of ancient Hellas renew itself. But we will not even content ourselves with that. Our civilization is to become even higher and more splendid. When finally the justification of our love is granted, then must we above all come out in public and prove by deeds not merely that we have earned tolerance, but rather that *Lieblingminne* is in ethical significance, in strength and beauty, equal to the formerly only justified *Frauenminne* [love of women].

Gotamo’s essay made clear that the GdE’s objectives and aspirations were to be understood in cultural terms.

This attitude was shared by other GdE members. Kupffer explained in the 1899 introduction to his anthology of homoerotic literature, “What do I understand by culture? The possibility of living out our drives and strengths, but without [acts of] violence. Nothing lies further from me than to preach deliverance through an excess of sensual

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pleasure; no, precisely in the repeated, voluntary limitation and restraint of one’s self can one become master.”

In the view of prominent GdE members, Germany was experiencing a cultural crisis that could only be remedied through a cultural response: empowering men anew through same-sex relationships. According to this perspective, any attempt to gain public sympathy and understanding for male-male attractions through discussions of sexual desire—especially discussions based in biological explanations or physiological causation, such as those made popular by Hirschfeld and the WhK—sidestepped the critical cultural issue. At worst, such discussions shifted the conversation to an examination of physical or mental afflictions—eliciting pity for the sufferer, but doing nothing to gain greater public interest in the larger cultural dilemma.

This chapter will examine the GdE’s concepts of masculinity and social organization, by first examining the characterization of the perceived cultural crisis, before turning to the specific remedies proposed by leading members.

**A Culture in Crisis**

In the view of the GdE, Germany was dominated by the prudery of an intolerant, close-minded petit bourgeoisie, who took no greater delight than stifling the pleasures of others through condemnation and shaming. Dr. Otto Kiefer (born 1876; death date unknown), a regular contributor to *Der Eigene* and a teacher involved in education reform, ridiculed such ignorance. In a 1902 booklet on the importance of homoeroticism

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109 See also Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, chap. 2.
and a Greek-inspired love of boys for reforming education, he used the pseudonym Dr. Reifegg. In exasperation, he wrote, “Certainly the eternally incurable Philistine, who cannot now or ever grasp man’s noblest and highest—‘rapture’—will always raise his discordant croaking about danger and immorality, by which he understands everything that cannot be measured by the only measure familiar to him, that of the mediocrity of the ‘eternal yesterday,’ and just seeing the not infrequent fact of a friendship that is prepared for self-sacrifice without any ‘reason’ awakens in him a quiet shudder.”

Kieffer and the GdE were hardly alone in the time period for seeing Wilhelmine society as largely stifling. Numerous groups in the contemporaneous Lebensreform movement—a broad term which included a wide variety of groups seeking social reform and national renewal through an emphasis on greater personal freedom—suggested back-to-nature efforts, changes in dietary habits, and an embrace of physical fitness and nudism as ways to escape the smothering social standards imposed by the urban petit and managerial bourgeoisie. These criticisms were frequently framed in generational terms and were strongly pronounced in the era’s burgeoning youth movement. Nor was the

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GdE alone in promulgating male liberation as a redress for larger social repression. Most notably, Stefan George championed a new aristocracy and new Hellenism in Germany’s male youth through his often inscrutable visionary poetry.\textsuperscript{113} The GdE was unique, however, in one regard: its insistence that social reform could be achieved through the practice of “pedagogical eros”—the mentoring of an adolescent boy by a man through intense emotional, intellectual, and occasionally sexual contact.

In establishing the need for a new concept of masculinity fostered through pedagogical eros, the GdE depicted social repression as existing at all levels of society and reinforced by a number of institutions and ideologies, both ancient and modern: the Catholic Church, parliamentary politics, rampant capitalism, and its attendant materialism. This perspective was neatly summarized in Eduard von Mayer’s concept of “the modern Middle Ages”—a term he coined and used as the title of a slim volume in 1905.

Mayer (1873–1960) was an art historian and the lifelong partner and closest friend of Kupffer, always at his side from 1897 onward.\textsuperscript{114} He was also Kupffer’s most important interpreter, using the nearly fifteen years that he outlived Kupffer to establish a foundation, organize Kupffer’s papers, and write glosses of the more esoteric writings. During Kupffer’s lifetime, Mayer was a contributor to \textit{Der Eigene}, the WhK \textit{Jahrbuch},


\textsuperscript{114} Élisàr von Kupffer, \textit{Aus einem wahrhaftlen Leben} (Minusio-Locarno: Sanctuarium Artis Elisarion, 1943), 320.
and several other publications aligned with the *Lebensreform* movement. His essays in these journals and magazines unfailingly supported Kupffer’s social agenda and highlighted the art historical and cultural significance of his artistic production.\(^{115}\)

In *Modernes Mittelalter* (Modern Middle Ages), Mayer surveyed the broad sweep of human history and concluded that no event—from the Reformation to the Enlightenment and through the French Revolution—had ever really liberated humanity from its most restrictive and frightened impulses. Once embodied in the institutional Church, those values were now upheld in the guise of social and political institutions acting in a “modern” manner. Mayer wrote, “The view of our entire modern state—from the most advanced, most anti-medieval social democracy onward—is rooted in the endeavor to annihilate the individual. Allowing one’s self to be eliminated is [considered to be] morality and thus the realm of work now includes the imposition of [this] morality onto individuals.”\(^{116}\)

By contrast, the new man should be a true individual, unencumbered by outdated social mores—much less the “nagging,” “narcissistic” demands of women—and liberated to pursue his cultural, political, and sexual interests. Kupffer had set the tone for this cultural revolution in his influential literature anthology. There, he called on men to take


inspiration from—and heed the warning of—the growing influence of the women’s movement. Mayer saw a similar threat in women’s increasing social prominence, but he put it more bluntly in a 1903 essay, “Oh you men, be men! Then we will again have a manly, even a humane culture!”

In articulating this vision of a masculinist culture, Mayer, Kupffer, and Brand were all inspired by the philosophy of Max Stirner. This included not only Stirner’s concept of “self-ownership,” but in particular his view of world history and cultural progress. Here is Stirner on the trajectory of human development:

The history of the world, whose shaping properly belongs altogether to the Caucasian race, seems till now to have run through two Caucasian ages, in the first of which we had to work out and work off our innate negroidity; this was followed in the second by Mongoloidity (Chineseness), which must likewise be terribly made an end of. Negroidity represents antiquity, the time of dependence on things (on cock’s eating, birds’ flight, on sneezing, on thunder and lightening, on the rustling of sacred trees, and so forth); Mongoloidity the time of dependence on thoughts, the Christian time. Reserved for the future are the words, “I am the owner [Eigner] of the world of things, and I am the owner of the world of the mind.”

In this passage, Stirner argued that cultural progress had been arrested because the Caucasian race had yet to break free from the negative influence of a mixed, and importantly, lesser racial heritage. This heritage manifested itself in a culture that subordinated individuals to the material realm of objects and the immaterial realm of thoughts. Furthermore, the current time, represented by the Church, continued to reflect

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this reality. Only the future offered the possibility of reversing the situation and achieving human domination over the combined distractions of thoughts and things—and only then if society was sufficiently awake to the possibility.

Stirner’s influence is clear in Brand’s description of Der Eigene’s purpose in an 1898 issue, “Der Eigene is supposed to primarily serve life—not the plodding slavery of the incomplete and one-dimensional, nor the exclusive priesthood that begs for bread . . . but rather the full and free air of the life of all those who hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Greek days and for the rebirth of Hellenic ideals of beauty, which are already beginning to dawn after the millennium-long night of Christian barbarism.”120

This conception of history, and in particular its insistence on the need for a radical break with the artificiality of the present through a return to the ideals of antiquity, was also indebted to German Romanticism and the writings of art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68). Historian Susanne Marchand appraised Winckelmann’s contribution to the pervasive philhellenism of the mid-eighteenth century, “For Winckelmann’s younger contemporaries, nature, in the form of the Greeks, called for the freeing of individual genius from the bondage of artificial social distinctions and over-refined courtly behavior, and they did not miss his insistence that freedom—according to Winckelmann’s definition, extant in ancient Greece—was an essential prerequisite of national artistic greatness. This association of the Greeks with nature, genius, and freedom, and of the modern world with the unnatural, overspecialized, and the tyrannical

120 Brand, “Über unsere Bewegung.”
was perhaps Winckelmann’s most significant contribution to German philhellenism.”

Remarkably, Winckelmann’s importance and Germany’s philhellenism persisted well beyond the young contemporaries referred to by Marchand—and certainly included Brand and his followers in the opening years of the twentieth century.

Winckelmann’s enduring scholarly and cultural legacy can partly be explained by his corpus of novel analytical writing on aesthetics. In his masterwork, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (The History of Art in Antiquity; 1764) he transcended the traditional chronicle of artists’ lives to produce the first “history of art”—pairing what would become known as “formalism,” and its systematic aesthetic analysis, with historical contextualization. For Wincklemann, this contextualization could include factors such as climate, which would have impacted the historical development of a society. But as Marchand notes above, Winckelmann’s historical analysis could also include the “freedom” of the society within which a piece of art was produced. Therefore, for his eighteenth-century contemporaries, Winckelmann’s novel contribution was a methodological approach that could be expanded upon for further studies into Greek art and ancient civilization. But for mid- and late-nineteenth-century readers demanding

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greater democratic participation and freedoms of press and assembly, his notions about the animating impulse of social freedom were equally important to his popularity.

This rather amorphous concept of “freedom” essential to Winckelmann’s aesthetic analysis was not framed in political terms, but referred more broadly to the social and sexual organization of a society. As a result, he could praise the beauty of the Hellenized art of Hadrian’s Rome as meeting for his understanding of a “free” society, because in his mind its aesthetics reflected the historical and cultural memory of freedom originally preserved in ancient Greek art.

In addition to Winckelmann’s insistence on the primacy of Greek art—and its attendant permissive society—the GdE embraced his conception of cultural development. Unlike other Romantic notions of history that emphasized a progressive evolution culminating in world harmony, Winckelmann depicted individual cultures as experiencing a growth cycle: birth, flowering, and ultimate decay. This view of cultures as organisms fated to wax and wane was later perfected by Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) in Der Untergang des Abendlandes (The Decline of the West; 1921). But already in the early years of the GdE’s existence, the notion of a German culture at the precipice of irreversible decay was used as an urgent plea for immediate action.

Motivated by this perspective of history, the GdE proffered a conception of masculinity liberated from the Church’s “hostility to the senses [Sinnenfeindlichkeit]” and the social expectation that female beauty would be the dominant measure of beauty.\textsuperscript{125} To realize such a new social organization, the GdE would first have to address and counter popular discourses about male homosexuality.

\textbf{Confronting Urnings, Intermediates, and the Third Sex}

Whether by preference or out of sociological and medical curiosity, Hirschfeld associated among, and came to be associated with, the hermaphrodites, transsexuals, and others who sought alternative gender identities within Wilhemine society. But the very figure that he defined as homosexual—whether termed Urning, third sex, or homosexual—was repulsive to GdE members: feminized, unrestrained socially, and entirely too definitive in his sexual tastes.

Hirschfeld’s most notable contribution to the scientific study of sex was his assertion that sexual preference was an innate, biological trait and not a pathological condition—a theory that was not widely endorsed at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{126} Only the contemporary psychiatrists Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) and Albert Moll (1862–1939) shared similar conceptions of sexuality.\textsuperscript{127} Physician Iwan Bloch

\textsuperscript{125} Bab, “Frauenbewegung und männliche Kultur,” 401, 404.
\textsuperscript{126} Magnus Hirschfeld, \textit{Der urnische Mensch} (Leipzig: Max Spohr, 1903).
(1872–1922) was instrumental in advancing the understanding of homosexuality from a pathological condition to part of a larger theory of sexuality based on an anthropological approach. Nonetheless, he represented the dominant scientific understanding of the era when he noted that, “A complete heterosexual can be changed into a typical homosexual.”

In his work, Hirschfeld established sexual categories that built on the work of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–95), a lawyer from Hannover. The sexual-orientation and identity categories Ulrichs established and then elaborated upon in twelve monographs published between 1864 and 1879 were an inspiration for both Hirschfeld and Krafft-Ebing. In 1864, Ulrichs wrote, “The fundamental theorem that I propose, and upon which I build my entire system: Nature includes a large class of people with a male physique, who in addition to sexual love of women also have a sexual inclination towards men or a sexual horror of women.” This is roughly thirty years after the Swiss

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129 Benedict Friedlaender bitterly criticized the later appropriation of Ulrichs's work, and in particular the success of Krafft-Ebing, “The medical men who followed [Ulrichs] had, each in his own way, pretty fair success with money, esteem, or both. One satisfied himself with commercial speculation on the need for sexual excitement in the public, who bought numerous editions of his so-called *Psychopathia sexualis*.” Friedlaender, “Denkschrift der Sezession,” 73.

hatmaker and author Heinrich Hössli (1784–1864) presented his theory of a third sex in a twelve-volume series titled *Eros. Die Männerliebe der Griechen* (Eros: Love Among Men in Ancient Greece; 1836/38), noting a difference between the physical appearance of men and their internal attractions and desires. He pointed to the possibility of the existence of a third sex: a male body with the soul of a woman. This possibility was embraced and developed by Ulrichs.

Ulrichs’s sexual taxonomy—whose nomenclature was inspired by Plato’s discussion of *Venus Urania*, the daughter of Uranus—included the “normal,” heterosexual man (*Dioning*); the bisexual man (*Urano-Dioning*); and the homosexual (*Urning*). The category of homosexuality was then further divided into four types: those who are masculine in appearance, mentality, and character (*Männling*); an intermediate homosexual (*Zwischen-Urning*); the homosexual of effeminate appearance and mentality (*Weibling*); and the homosexual who acquires “normal” habits and appearance (the virile *Urning*).

In Hirschfeld’s earliest work on sexuality—*Sappho und Socrates, Wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechts?* (Sappho and Socrates: How does one explain the love of men and women to persons of their own sex?; 1901: 51–55 where he introduces the concept of a female psyche in a male body, “*anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa.*”


— he struggled to establish biological categories that could adequately account for otherwise elusive notions of sexual attraction. In his conception, the human body contained residual aspects of the opposite sex and those vestiges were critical to the development of a heterosexual arousal response. For example, the female aspects of heterosexual men accounted for their attraction to women. Conversely, Hirschfeld noted that the “residual penis” of women compelled them to be attracted toward men.

By contrast, male homosexuals (Urnings, also in Hirschfeld’s early terminology) had the physical characteristics of heterosexual males but were psychically attracted to males. This was because Urnings lacked vestigial female physical characteristics, and thus had no desire for women. Similarly, lesbians (Urniden) were depicted as suffering from “the atrophy of the residual male organ.” In positing this variety of gender identities and sexualities, Hirschfeld was inspired by Darwinism and the study of embryology to propose that they were remnants of the process of evolution.

Furthermore, in rejecting a dichotomy of the sexes, Hirschfeld was also influenced by the work of the prominent biologist and naturalist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), who popularized Darwinism within Germany. Haeckel developed recapitulation theory, the notion that the entire process of evolutionary development within a species

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133 Magnus Hirschfeld (writing as Th. Ramien), Sappho und Socrates, Wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechts? (Leipzig: Max Spohr, 1896), 14.
134 Ibid., 11–12.
135 Haeckel’s most famous work explaining his vision of Darwinism is Ernst Haeckel, Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte: gemeinverständliche wissenschaftliche Vorträge über die Entwicklungslehre im Allgemeinen und diejenige von Darwin, Goethe und Lamarck, im Besonderen über die Anwendung derselben auf den Ursprung des Menschen und andere damit zusammenhangende Grundfragen der Naturwissenschaft (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1868).
was summarized in each individual organism’s biological development. For Hirschfeld, this theory offered the potential for new insights into the development of multiple human sexualities.\(^\text{136}\)

In keeping with his biological explanation, Hirschfeld insisted, contrary to Krafft-Ebing, that there were no cases of acquired homosexuality. Hirschfeld noted, “Even Krafft-Ebing emphasizes that without the predisposing moment of stress, neither masturbation nor any other cause could ever lead to a contrary sexual feeling. He admits to the fact that the congenital factor is indispensable. Nothing comes from nothing.”\(^\text{137}\)

Numerous testimonies from men and women who struggled to define and understand their sexual desires demonstrate that many took comfort and solace from medical publications such as Krafft-Ebing’s most famous text, *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886). Such works gave people with marginal and marginalized sexual desires a way to conceptualize their attractions—and an attendant vocabulary.\(^\text{138}\)

Members of the GdE could not see themselves within any of the categories established by Hirschfeld. Nor did they consider themselves to be part of such a

\(^{136}\) Otto Weininger (1880–1903) was also inspired by Hirscheld’s work and promoted compatible theories of sex and gender, yet he approached these topics from a distinctly misogynistic viewpoint. For instance, Weininger insisted upon a continuum between the male and female sexes, but described the female essence within men as the bane of male existence. See Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*, 3rd ed. (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1904), here 393.

\(^{137}\) Hirschfeld (writing as Th. Ramien), *Sappho und Socrates*, 17.

libidinous and licentious milieu as the one he depicted and frequented. Furthermore, they did not seek a broader continuum of biological possibility, but sought a hierarchy upon which to place desire among and for men at the highest level. In articulating their own conception of sexuality, members of the GdE were nonetheless forced to work outward from and against the previously established sexual categories documented by Hirschfeld and other prominent researchers.

The paradoxical result is that while the GdE strenuously defended the rights of individuals to pursue whatever sexual interests were most appealing—and enjoined others to ignore the proscriptions of the Church and state—they still reinforced and traded in the most pernicious of stereotypes about male homosexuals. Furthermore, they pathologized sexual attraction in the very same manner that they protested was the potentially dangerous consequence of Hirschfeld’s research on homosexuality.

In their attempts to demonstrate the purity of their own masculinity, Der Eigene writers described homosexuals as some of the worst members of society: passive, singular in their tastes and pursuits (presumably sodomy), and unable to resist sexual temptation.\textsuperscript{139} Kupffer criticized those who identify themselves as homosexual:

They usually seek only their particular sexual type—a truly inartistic decision, even if they are literary and art critics. And, as they are always accustomed to a

\textsuperscript{139} Hirschfeld was at times equally skeptical of women’s abilities. He observed, “Woman is more receptive in her love and mental life than man. She is more impressionable, sentimental and spontaneous. But she has not the same gift of abstract thought, nor for real creative activity. Her capacity to produce is focused on relatively simple mental functions.” See Magnus Hirschfeld, \emph{Die Transvestiten. Ein Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material} (Berlin: Alfred Pulvermacher, 1910), 277.
mask-like, sham life [Scheinleben], their feelings cannot be guessed. It is to me clear, that an unrestricted existence is strange to them and they are afraid to be revealed and their one-sidedness seen.\textsuperscript{140}

For the GdE, advancing these individuals’ social recognition and acceptance was tantamount to promoting an agenda for women’s rights. And thus, completely counter to its vision of male-dominated culture.

GdE members ascribed to a classical Greek understanding of sexual activity with members as “passive” or “active.” Their contempt for those who could be associated with the term “passive” was barely concealed. Just as the ancient Greeks associated such passivity with women, the GdE saw males who identified as passive as suspect and embodying all that was foreign, dangerous, and corrosive about female sexuality.\textsuperscript{141}

Women and homosexuals were dual targets of attack in the GdE’s attempt to demonstrate that its conceptions of sexuality belonged to a longer tradition of hegemonic masculinity. In his memoir, Kupffer summarized his frustration with those who misunderstood his term Lieblingminne and thought it referred to homosexuals. Never mind that the terms Lieblingsminne and Freundesliebe were deliberately chosen because they obscured more than they revealed. Kupffer stated:

I do not mean “homosexual” nor an intermediate stage [Zwischenstufe, as in the title of the WhK’s annual journal], but a superior level [Überstufe]. I also do not

\textsuperscript{140} Kupffer, \textit{Aus einem wahrhaften Leben}, 323–24.
mean the “womanish” [weibisches] essence of a man in a male body or vice versa. They probably exist, I know. There are very “feminine” men, quite passive, yet certainly not graceful. In fact, [they are] often masculine, angular, and neglectful of their outward appearance. There is a certain contradiction between outside and inside, at least not harmony. It is strange that those who do not seem to be men want to be sought after by males. It can be very distressing for them to realize with surprise their rejection by men.¹⁴²

While Kupffer outright rejected medical and psychological discourse of sexuality, he did not disagree with the characterization of the homosexual as a being in fundamental conflict: a passive (feminine) constitution masquerading in a masculine body. But by pointing out that homosexuals were fated to be rejected by the very objects of their desire, he only underlined the contrast with the true practitioner of Freundsieber. This man was not bound by his desires, nor distracted by idle thoughts. He was superior, singular in his masculinity, and retained no trace of feminine influence.

In attempting to present an alternate vision to Hirschfeld’s biologically-based understanding of sexuality, the GdE’s only two physician members, Benedict Friedlaender and Edwin Bab, were instrumental in laying out a counter argument. As doctors, they were particularly well positioned to counter Hirschfeld with their own medical training. Nonetheless, both primarily opted for social-scientific arguments to present an understanding of sexuality grounded in cultural history.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Kupffer, Aus einem wahrhaften Leben, 78–79.
Friedlaender stated that he had also been initially inspired by the writings of Darwin and Haeckel, as well as his own studies of physiology, botany, and mathematics. Yet he vehemently rejected any attempts to argue for greater legal and social rights for women based on theories of evolution or contemporary scientific insight. Friedlaender wrote in ridicule, “Nothing is so overwhelmingly stupid and such a great nonsense as the fanatic belief in equality of the sexes, which is cultivated in the so-called women’s question.”

Answering this “women’s question” was fundamental to the work of both Bab and Friedlaender, with Friedlaender advocating for the most extreme position: a strictly circumscribed role for women in society, culture, and politics. Bab was more moderate in his views, but countering the social influence of women was still essential to his own reasoning and promotion of intimate male friendships. As historian Harry Oosterhuis described the GdE’s views, “Homo-erotic friendship is a means to develop individual uniqueness and it guarantees that the male personality does not fall a prey to social constraint, adaption, superficiality and leveling.”


144 Friedlaender, Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios, 1908, 52.
145 Ibid., 74.
Friedlaender argued that his book, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios* (The Renaissance of Eros Uranios; 1904), and intimate male friendships in general could profoundly alter the cultural landscape:

The triple alliance of women’s influence, moral bondage [*Sittenknechtschaft*], and authority worship—a trinity that in almost countless small and large trivialities of daily life, which, like water droplets eroding a stone, slowly wears away men’s freedom—would lose its destructive power. We would return to man with his family, instead of it [possessing him], according to Schopenhauer’s accurate impressions of what would happen.¹⁴⁷

Anti-feminist sentiment was not foreign to the GdE nor to the Wilhelmine era in general, particularly as a reaction to the increasingly visible presence of the women’s movement.¹⁴⁸ But Friedlaender’s rejection of women was drawn in the starkest of terms: they were a threat to the security and future of the nation-state.

Women were obstacles to love between men. And in turn, by threatening the flowering of male relationships, women were natural enemies of the state because its power derived from masculine strength.¹⁴⁹ This was not just an attack on women, but also a counter to a theory in the growing field of racial hygiene that homosexuals “lacked the drive to preserve the species” and would disrupt the “life process of the race.”¹⁵⁰

Friedlaender objected:

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¹⁴⁹ Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, 1908, 278.
Love between the two sexes or between parents is not the only kind of love; rather there is also a third type of love that is primarily social. It has nothing to do with procreation, but is the very foundation of the social principle. If one eliminated this third type of love, which exists between male adults, the state would disintegrate into a mass of individual families.\footnote{Benedict Friedlaender, \textit{Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios. Die physiologische Freundschaft, ein normaler Grundtrieb des Menschen und eine Frage der männlichen Gesellungsfreiheit. In naturwissenschaftlicher, naturrechtlicher, kulturgeschichtlicher und sittenkritischer Beleuchtung}, 2nd ed. (Treptow-Berlin: Zack, 1908), 213, as quoted in Claudia Bruns, “The Politics of Masculinity in the (Homo-)Sexual Discourse (1880 to 1920),” \textit{German History} 23, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): 312.}

Intimate bonding between males, later expressed elsewhere in the mystical notion of the \textit{Männerbund}, was the cornerstone of a vibrant, and even virile, state and society.\footnote{Hans Blüher, \textit{Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft: eine Theorie der menschlichen Staatsbildung nach Wesen und Wert}, vol. 1, \textit{Der Typus Inversus} (Jena: Diederichs, 1917), 7.} The love that arose from an association of men was the force that drove the state forward to new conquests and glory. Denying or devaluing this love not only left the state in a fragmented, atomized condition, it also led to other social ills, including prostitution.\footnote{Friedlaender, \textit{Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios}, 1908, 7.}

Friedlaender and Bab joined most authors publishing in \textit{Der Eigene} in arguing that bisexuality was the common, dominant condition for males. Most GdE members were married men and the idea of being attracted exclusively to males was foreign from their lived experience and distant from the reality confronted in everyday life. Brand asserted in the GdE bylaws, “Bisexuality is a component of all people and recognition of this fact by a broader public is the only way that \textit{Freundesliebe} will reach the same level of social acceptance as \textit{Frauenliebe} [love of women] currently does. It is the basis of all
forms of love and an attraction of varying degrees of intensity is an elemental and natural part of every individual.”

As was always common in Der Eigene, the prevalence of bisexuality was traced back to antiquity. In his 1903 essay, the anonymous Gotamo claimed,

We can only explain the extraordinary extent of Socratic love in Hellas through the doctrine of bisexuality, and through it every apparent puzzle is solved by itself. . . . The history of antiquity teaches us that numerous outstanding men found pleasure in the mature form of woman and then again in the blooming beauty of youths, and we absolutely cannot assume that all of them did so from vice, craving for pleasure, satiety, or because it was the general custom. . . . The homosexual part of the sex drive of the bisexual was directed above all toward youthful individuals who were to some extent related to the feminine type, and the whole Greek cultural history is the most telling proof of the splendid, moral heights to which this drive can be advanced.

According to this view, the love between a man and a youth was superior to that of a homosexual relationship, because it was rooted in Greek heritage and part of every man, whether married or not. Furthermore, bissexuals had an aesthetic sensibility that attracted them to young boys, whereas homosexuals had a psychological predisposition attracting them to adult men.

In the GdE, exceptions were rare to the belief in universal bisexuality. Friedlaender conceded that there was likely a small minority of men (he estimated it to be two percent) who were strictly attracted to men, and for whom sex with a woman was not possible. He further acknowledged that bisexuality in the sense of “an equal mixture of

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154 Brand, GdE Satzung, 8.
155 Gotamo, “In die Zukunft!,” 72, as translated by Oosterhuis and Kennedy, Homosexuality and Male Bonding, 132.
both inclinations” was likely to be exceedingly rare.\textsuperscript{156} But any broader discussion of a continuum of sexual desire or attraction—essentially anything that would distract from the GdE’s conception of male eros as the pinnacle of human sexuality—was absent from \textit{Der Eigene}.

**Pedagogical Eros: An Answer to the “Sexual Problem”**

For all of the GdE’s strenuous denunciations of the Church, the group otherwise adhered to a largely conservative set of principles for social organization. They promoted the family as society’s central organizing principle, preached strict monogamy during marriage, and generally argued for the preservation of traditional gender roles.\textsuperscript{157} They might revel in the erotic, but disparaged carnal desire and non-procreative sexual acts performed simply for pleasure. Any sex prior to marriage was not to be heterosexual and only as the consequence of a deep emotional connection with the sexual partner.

Brand formalized this view in the GdE bylaws:

The GdE advises the young man to refrain from sexual intercourse with any woman before marriage. But until then, he is to seek his greatest joy, his moral strength, his physical salvation, his mental calmness, and his inner peace through intimate intercourse with a friend. . . . The GdE is convinced that such fostering of friendship and mutual affirmation of body and soul is absolutely necessary. It is not only in the interest of the mental and physical improvement of our race, but also secures for all the future the blooming and flourishing of an always joyful and happy youth.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} Friedlaender, \textit{Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios}, 1908, 78, 83.
\textsuperscript{158} Brand, \textit{GdE Satzung}, 12.
This return to the ancient Greek practice of pederasty, or “pedagogical eros” as it was termed within the GdE, was proposed as the solution to the problem of unchecked male sexuality.

The topic of the male “sexual problem” was addressed with vigor by Edwin Bab in a fascinating essay, “Frauenbewegung und männliche Kultur” (The women’s movement and masculine culture), published in Der Eigene in 1903. Bab examined the growing social dilemma of what to do with boys and young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty. In the years between the end of childhood and marriage, Bab painted a dire picture: young men run amok, masturbating to excess, hiring prostitutes, spreading sexually transmitted disease, impregnating society’s most eligible young women, and not providing child support. The “sexual problem,” as Bab termed it, was to be understood as “the manner in which a young man can and should satisfy his sex drive.”

Noting that marriage remained the most socially responsible way to “corral men’s passions and provide them with the responsibilities that come with being a husband and father,” Bab nonetheless acknowledged that the organization of contemporary German society meant that most men would realistically marry after age twenty-one. He was moderately hopeful that the push for greater women’s rights would allow for a woman’s participation in the selection of a marriage partner, thereby allowing marriage at a younger age. But in the absence of broader social acceptance of the women’s movement, an alternate approach would be required.

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159 Bab, “Frauenbewegung und männliche Kultur,” 395.
160 Ibid., 394.
161 Ibid.
In laying out his argument, Bab directly referenced Kupffer’s literary anthology, embracing its clarion call for a social and cultural emancipation from feminine tastes and desires and its rejection of the female form as the ideal of beauty. And then he went further:

The movement for male culture demands of the youth that he join in the closest friendship with a man who suits him, that he not comply with the generally posed demand that he may love only women and repress his same-sex love-drive; that he not endanger himself, his family, and the state in the arms of a prostitute; that he not go on the prowl for decent women; that through excessive masturbation he also not rob himself of his most valuable strengths in early youth and work at the degeneration of the nation.  

As is so often the case in these essays, he took umbrage at society’s misunderstanding and misapprehension of the GdE’s mission. Emphasizing the group’s values were rooted in Greek tradition and calling to task the WhK for promoting an image of Lieblingminne as the province of effeminate “half-men,” there was to be little room for doubt that the GdE was an assembly of the most upright, moral, and masculine of men.

Despite such posturing, Der Eigene’s first two issues of 1903 were confiscated in the spring of that year as a violation “of Paragraph 184 [the prohibition against creation and dissemination of obscene writings and pornographic images] in relation to Paragraph 175.” Then, in October, the May and June issues were also confiscated. Brand was formally charged in the district court in Leipzig with having “glorified the homosexual inclination between males in several issues of the magazine.” The inclusion of Schiller’s

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162 Bab, Frauenbewegung und Freundesliebe, 19.
163 Bab, “Frauenbewegung und männliche Kultur,” 400.
164 Vorwärts, March 1, 1903.
poem “*Die Freundschaft*” (Friendship) and Bab’s essay were specifically cited as the grounds for censorship.¹⁶⁵

The trial was covered in the October 5, 1903 edition of the Social-Democratic newspaper *Vorwärts* under the ironic headline, “Morality Rescued in Saxony.”¹⁶⁶ When the final judgment was rendered on June 10, 1904, the journal’s publisher, Max Spohr, was fined 150 marks (equivalent to approximately six weeks of wages for the average printer in 1904) and Brand was sentenced to two months in prison, which he would ultimately serve in Berlin’s Tegel prison in the beginning of 1905.¹⁶⁷

The trial deterred neither Brand nor Bab. Instead, Bab expanded his essay and reissued it as a book, *Frauenbewegung und Freundesliebe: Versuch einer Lösung des geschlechtlichen Problems* (The women’s movement and Freundesliebe: an attempt at a solution to the sexual problem), through Brand’s press in 1904. In the new edition, Bab emphasized in more positive tones how the women’s movement could prosper with support from the movement for masculine culture.

For Bab, ancient Judea served as an ideal model of society, where the family was the principal and primary organizing element of community. But, even if the women’s movement were to gain greater political traction, it simply didn’t have the capacity to

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¹⁶⁵ *Vorwärts*, October 1, 1903.
¹⁶⁶ “Sittlichkeitsrettung in Sachsen,” *Vorwärts*, October 5, 1903.
address the social issue of prostitution.\textsuperscript{168} A better solution to the problem of sexual excess required assistance from adherents to \textit{Freundesliebe}.\textsuperscript{169} Bab explained:

Humanity progresses on a spiral upwards. The women’s movement is to ancient Judea as the movement of male culture is to ancient Greek ideals. But together we will have reached a higher turn in the spiral: both cultures will merge into a higher, more perfect form. No longer will women solely dominate the taste of man and demand love from him. They will no longer be his slaves, but the equal, evenly matched companion. So we blossom through women’s emancipation and \textit{Freundesliebe}—once, and hopefully in the not too distant future—into a truly human culture. Or as a Nietzschean might say, a superhuman.

He identified the pervasive influence of Christianity as the sole reason that heterosexual love was the only relationship type recognized as legitimate “and Benedict Friedlaender calls it quite rightly an absurdity that human nature has altered since then.”\textsuperscript{170}

The women’s movement was merely instrumental in Bab’s view, but he was not averse to taking Friedlaender to task for ignoring the possible benefit that the movement could provide to the GdE in achieving its social program:

In fact, Benedict Friedlaender has developed reactionary views with regard to the position and role of women—but so far he is the only representative in the movement of male culture [with such opinions]. It is especially unusual coming from this otherwise astute researcher, but the extent of his unusual illogic is such that every fair-thinking person must feel repelled by it. Neither Brand nor Kupffer, nor the vast majority of the movement agrees with Friedlaender in this regard. Elisar v. Kupffer emphasized in his first publication that the mother is one of the most important factors in life. He protested against any charge of misogyny by noting that the woman—as a wife, girlfriend, and girl—is a flower that we do not want banished from the garden of life.\textsuperscript{171}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{168} Bab, \textit{Frauenbewegung und Freundesliebe}, 19.
\footnote{169} Ibid., 14.
\footnote{170} Ibid., 16.
\footnote{171} Ibid., 22.
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In this manner, Bab tried to consciously link his ideas with the established culture of hegemonic masculinity, emphasizing again that unlike homosexuals, the GdE was capable of valuing women, even if it saw them as inferior.

**Eros as an Essential Force of State and Society**

Many of the ideas about pedagogical eros promoted by the GdE would receive their most fully realized treatment in the work of Hans Blüher (1888–1952). Blüher was an influential early member of the *Wandervogel* (migratory bird), a popular youth group founded in 1901 on the outskirts of Berlin and determined to inspire a new generation of German youth through hiking expeditions and communal exercises in the unspoiled countryside.

Blüher had introduced GdE co-founder Wilhlem Jansen to the *Wandervogel*. Jansen became an influential adult leader within the group and caused a major split in the organization in 1908 when he was asked to resign his position following accusations of homosexuality. Together, Blüher and Jansen founded a new group in 1910, the *Jung-Wandervogel*, which in contrast to the rest of the youth movement never allowed girls as members, but nonetheless managed to attract half of the original group’s members.\(^{172}\)

In 1912, Blüher began writing a history of the *Wandervogel*, where he also expounded on ideas first discussed in *Der Eigene*. In the controversial third volume of his history, *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* (The German

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Wandervogel Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon), Blüher explored popular notions of human sexuality—Hirschfeld even contributed an introduction to the volume—before adding his own theories, including glosses on the notion that people were universally bisexual.\(^{173}\) According to him, sexual orientation vacillated during childhood and puberty, before finally settling on either heterosexuality or homosexuality based on which was most potent or “orgasmic” within an individual.\(^{174}\)

Blüher also used his notoriety and the popular embrace of the youth movement to advance a related concept promoting erotic relationships between males as the foundation to society.\(^{175}\) In 1917 he published *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (The role of eroticism in male society), which built on years of his published writings. Blüher extended his theories to posit male homosexual relationships were the fundamental organizing principle of society, whereas heterosexuality defined the scope of and sustained the institution of the family.\(^{176}\) Blüher wrote:

Apart from the [human race’s] foundational principle [*Gestellungsprinzip*] of the family, which is driven by the power of male-female Eros, a second force acts: “male society.” It owes its existence to the male-male Eros and has an effect in male associations [*Männerbünde*]. The compulsive, mutually opposing action of both brings people to the state.\(^{177}\)


\(^{177}\) Ibid., 1:7.
This notion was clearly indebted to Friedlaender’s earlier assertions. But with Blüher, the emphasis was now clearly on the state’s benefit from male homoeroticism, whereas Friedlaender had argued for a dual role for men in sustaining both family and state.

Similar to the GdE, he promoted the importance of the family as an essential component of social organization. But he challenged society to recognize the inherent power of male eroticism as an equally galvanizing social force:

The state of the matter: for the family, as the primary organizing principle of the state, sexuality and Eros are openly and without denial apparent. In the second, male society, [sexuality] is forced through a highly complicated system submerged beneath consciousness and only rarely emerges. However it occasionally does and then reveals its true character. The male society is a completely secretive formation that tentatively can be made to speak only by a special type of researcher capable of a specific mental attitude. And nevertheless it works persistently through the filter of male associations—for all times and in all peoples [Völker] that mankind has witnessed—fully undiminished and unimpaired by the same passion, the same stealth and mimicry, by the same ethos and by the same ability that seeks to the reign in the spirit [den Geist für sich verantwortlich zu machen] and renounce Eros.\(^{178}\)

Owing to the popularity of the youth movement, Blüher probably provided the largest audience that the GdE’s notions of pedagogical eros would ever find.\(^{179}\) And that despite the fact that his writing was pedestrian and opaque at best, unintelligible at worst.

This attempt nonetheless marked a crucial moment of transformation in the discourse of masculinity. Historian Claudia Bruns has observed, “After 1916, then, the signifier of failed masculinity shifted in the masculinist discourse from the

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\(^{178}\) Ibid., 1:8.

\(^{179}\) The education reformer Gustav Wyneken (1875–1964) worked closely with Blüher and Jansen in the Wandervogel and youth movements. He was instrumental in conceptualizing and articulating the form of pedagogical eros also championed by Blüher. See Gustav Wyneken, Eros (Lauenburg/Elbe: Saal, 1921).
feminine/abnormal man as described in the theory of sexual gradations (Hirschfeld’s *Zwischenstufentheorie*) to the Jewish man of the ‘secondary race’.\footnote{Bruns, “The Politics of Masculinity,” 318; italics in the original.} Blüher’s subsequent writings reflected this trend, turning virulently anti-Semitic as Germany’s loss of the war made it obvious that women were not going to be excluded from the political sphere and masculinity could perhaps be more successfully restored and redefined, by contrasting it with the Jew as the reviled Other.\footnote{See in particular Hans Blüher, *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft: eine Theorie der menschlichen Staatsbildung nach Wesen und Wert*, vol. 2, *Familie und Männerbund* (Jena: Diederichs, 1919), 170; *Secessio judaica. Philosophische Grundlegung der historischen Sicht des Judentums und der antisemitischen Bewegung* (Berlin: Weisse-Ritter-Verlag, 1922), 49; Blüher’s political and philosophical development in Claudia Bruns, *Politik des Eros* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 211–320.} The resulting rupture between the GdE and Blüher was made all the more complete in light of Friedlaender’s Jewish heritage and Bab’s enthusiastic reverence for ancient Jewish history and culture.

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The actual practice of pedagogical eros was never discussed in great detail by GdE members. Instead, it was presented in the most general terms as beneficial to boys and young men, but even in the few descriptions available, it is clear that it was the older participant who revelled in the romantic and poetic possibilities. More troubling, is that in these descriptions, GdE members rarely referred to their younger counterparts with anything approaching a shared humanity—they were primarily discussed as visual objects and a means to an end: cultural improvement. In many ways these boys were as alive as the statue of Apollo on display at the museum. Which is to say, that for many in the GdE, Apollo was indeed more alive than the average, uninterested viewer might
suspect, but in the end, he was still an aesthetic object and expedient method to catapult one to a higher state of consciousness and being.

The result is a historical record filled with hundreds of images of young men, evidenced by the meticulous catalogs kept by Brand, Kupffer, and others. The blossoming of youth was thus captured and meticulously preserved like a flower under glass. But who these boys and young men were, and what they made of their experiences with pedagogical eros, is largely missing from the historical record.

A rare exception can be found in historian Mark Cornwall’s examination of the life of Heinz Rutha (1897–1937)—a pioneer of the Sudeten German youth movement and a charismatic leader of the Bohemian Wandervogel, who was inspired by Blüher’s early writings. Cornwall offers the painful recounting of Franz Veitenhansl, a fifteen-year-old apprentice at Rutha’s family saw mill. His signed 1935 statement alleging unwanted sexual contact was preserved by police and ultimately used years later by Rutha’s political detractors to prevent his further rise in Czech national politics.

That testimony and other statements gathered from Rutha’s cohort of devoted young followers, demonstrate that the personal and sexual boundaries between mentor and student in the homoerotic world of the youth movement were frequently blurred. Some of these boys did describe the sexual contact as having a “spiritual dimension” corresponding to the purest of Platonic models, but most seemed to accept the abuse of

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182 Cornwall, *The Devil’s Wall*, 118–19.
183 Ibid., 148–51.
power as an expected and accepted fact within the youth movement.\textsuperscript{184} It is important to note that even if some of these statements were ultimately used for political ends, most were originally told to the police as genuine complaints and were not compelled out of political pressure.

In the absence of similar records, what remains then are a few descriptions from GdE members. In his memoirs, Kupffer described with obsessive detail his first pederastic relationship. In 1898, Kupffer, then twenty-six years old, was renting a room in the Berlin neighborhood of Charlottenburg and encountered Adolf Schmitz, the son of his landlady.\textsuperscript{185} Adolf was twelve years old and Kupffer said that the boy awakened in him the same feeling that Saul must have experienced upon encountering David, future king of Judah and Israel.\textsuperscript{186} Notably, GdE member Hugo Höppener (1868–1948, but better known by his artistic name, Fidus) illustrated an early title page for Kupffer’s \emph{Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe} featuring a young David playing a lyre before Saul and his royal court [Figure 6]. The illustration was never used for the published version of the anthology, but appeared in promotional materials in \emph{Der Eigene}.\textsuperscript{187}

Shortly after their first meeting, Kupffer nicknamed the boy “Fino.” Kupffer remained in contact with him for the next six years, including exchanging letters and taking him on extensive trips to some of Europe’s important cities.\textsuperscript{188} In 1904, Schmitz

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{185} Kupffer, \emph{Aus einem wahrhaften Leben}, 296.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 259.
\textsuperscript{187} \emph{Der Eigene} 3, no. 2 (July 1899): back cover.
\textsuperscript{188} Kupffer, \emph{Aus einem wahrhaften Leben}, 231, 263–64, 299.
was forbidden by his mother from contacting Kupffer.\textsuperscript{189} Despite repeated attempts to exchange letters, Kupffer was unable to again reach Schmitz. Schmitz was killed in battle on July 7, 1916 near the town of Péronnein, during the opening days of the Battle of the Somme.\textsuperscript{190} In Kupffer’s entire body of oil paintings—largely completed between 1905 and 1930, and numbering more than 180 works in the official catalog—Schmitz was continuously depicted.

Schmitz joins hundreds of boys whose voices are missing from the written record. But he and the others are nonetheless reminders that no matter how abstract and convoluted the ideas presented in \textit{Der Eigene}, there were real lives affected and sometimes damaged by the practices the GdE advocated. Despite the GdE’s tortured rationalizations for pederasty, the group was nonetheless also making real contributions to cultural and aesthetic expression, as will be seen in the discussion of photography, painting, and illustration that follows in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 302.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 303.
3. In Word and Image: 
The Visual Culture of Manhood

In his monumental *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (The History of Ancient Art; 1764) the eminent German art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann declared, “It is not beauty which captivates us, but sensuality.”¹⁹¹ This one statement succinctly captures the guiding principle of the GdE in promulgating a visual style that venerated the sensuous and erotically charged. Indeed, Winckelmann’s influential theories of art were fundamental to the GdE’s promotion of neoclassical aesthetics and the male body as the highest standard of beauty. Not content to simply change contemporary society’s understanding of art, the GdE aspired to more: an artistic style that aroused the senses and touched the soul of the beholder. This style was at once a challenge to the reigning moral standards and also a rallying cry to abandon empty classical formalism for a kind of art that pulsed with vitality—and the promise of a changed society.

The transformative power of culture—whether in the form of verse and prose or visual art—was central to the content of *Der Eigene*. Furthermore, it was fundamental to the self-image of the journal’s contributors, who viewed their otherwise marginally circulated artwork as capable of creating lasting change in German society—if only their art were properly appreciated.¹⁹² Culture’s importance—and not just any cultural production, but the more highly refined and stylized, the better—was repeatedly invoked by GdE members as a way to effect social change. More critically, the journal provided a

¹⁹² Exact circulation numbers are not available, but probably the number of *Der Eigene* subscribers never exceeded 1,500. 1,000 copies are listed for the 1905 press run in *Der Eigene* 5, no. 1 (January 1905): 2. See Oosterhuis and Kennedy, *Homosexuality and Male Bonding*, 4.
forum to model the social goals of the group on the printed page. The moment was fleeting, to be sure, but it was essential. The fleeting moment was exactly what Karl Marx called the revolutionary moment, although these artists had little other to do with Marxist philosophy.

To emphasize the rarified view that GdE members held of their own potential contribution to the realm of arts and culture, enrollment rolls and donor lists were sorted by cultural specialty. Members were designated as authors, sculptors, painters, composers, photographers, or recitation artists (Vortragskünstler). In a list of GdE donors covering the years from 1897 to 1925, eighty-five of the 104 members and founders listed were authors.\(^{193}\) This was mirrored in the published material within the pages of Der Eigene. For instance, in the seven issues published in 1903, poetry comprised more than half of the content and of that amount, a quarter was written by Brand.\(^{194}\)

In 1905, Eduard von Mayer impugned modern Germany’s aesthetic standards as beholden to outmoded clerical proscriptions and misguided scientific proclamations about the body’s reaction to beauty:

Why “should” art not have an erotic effect? Why “may” beauty not sensuously inspire? Why is sensual pleasure, the bodily bliss and desire, something marginal? [Why is] art something profane? Is it indeed then to abide the physiological requirements of a gland, to doom the pursuit of one’s whole being toward highest bliss? Why? The Middle Ages could answer: the Bible prohibits it because the senses so increase the joy in man that he no longer feels as a lump of dust, but as divine beside the one true God and—“thou shalt have no other gods before me.”\(^{195}\)

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\(^{194}\) Keilson-Lauritz, *Geschichte der Geschichte*, 90.

\(^{195}\) Mayer, *Modernes Mittelalter*, 33.
Mayer’s words reveal an essential point about the GdE’s aesthetic conceptions: their interest in art was about more than mere surfaces, it was about the intellectual inspiration and spiritual elevation achieved through the ineffable physical reaction of experiencing the truly beautiful. For them, the experience also involved at the same time a moral component and a physically erotic component. They acknowledged no tension between the moral and erotic components, but in fact considered the erotic component to be integral to the new morality.

Because of the GdE’s fervent zeal to realize the erotic potential of art, particularly within the visual arts, its members noted two opportunities that had to be seized in their representations. First, there was the opportunity to represent the group as engaged in the lonely, but sacred, work of exalting the beauty of the naked body. Second, there was the opportunity to vilify the educated middle class as narrow minded and anti-modern. In even the earliest issues of Der Eigene, before the journal was explicitly dedicated to male culture, nudity was frequently invoked to mock the prudery of bourgeois morals. In a poem from 1896, Heinrich Vormann taunted, “Our shamelessness, dear Spießbürger, is our shame—our shame is our shamelessness! However, we have broken thoroughly with your terror of flesh, with fear of sensuality, with the fig-leaf regulations: we sing the praises of beautiful nudity!”

Even though visual art was a minor portion of the total material published in Der Eigene, it was indispensible to understanding and realizing the GdE’s goals. As stated in the bylaws and on the cover of several issues of Der Eigene, “Der Eigene fights in word

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and image for the rebirth of Freundsieber, for a cult of youthful beauty, and for the spring of a third Renaissance—against philistinism [Spießbürgertum] and hypocrisy and against any suppression of personality.”

The recurring appearance of the phrase “word and image” throughout the bylaws serves as an important reminder of the crucial role accorded to the visual in the GdE’s development and in achieving its social goals.

The group’s repeated emphasis on representing their worldview in word and image is as a caution to us, a reminder that for GdE members, the two were inextricably intertwined. Nonetheless, the most prominent historical works to examine the GdE’s history have focused almost exclusively on the organization’s literary contributions.

This chapter will seek to partially rectify the oversight by focusing on representative visual works produced by notable members of the GdE and situate that work within the literary output of the group’s members and German intellectual history concerning art and aesthetics.

**Toward a Universal Conception of Beauty**

In promoting its vision of erotic male friendship, the GdE had to continually confront the fact that many of the ideals central to members’ self-conception and the success of their project were also associated with German society’s understanding of

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197 Brand, *GdE Satzung*, 34. This mission statement also appears later, see “Der Eigene kämpft,” *Der Eigene: Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur* 11, no. 1 (January 1926): cover.

198 For additional examples in the bylaws of the phrase “word and image” (Wort und Bild), see *GdE Satzung*, 15: “[The GdE] seeks to cultivate in word and image and through sports a cult of youthful beauty, as was custom at the height of antiquity.” See also ibid., 20: “The G.D.E. claims for artists and authors the right to celebrate the love of friends at the same level as the love of a woman and to portray in word and image Freundsieber and youthful beauty . . .

199 Keilson-Lauritz, *Geschichte der Geschichte*; Oosterhuis and Kennedy, *Homosexuality and Male Bonding*. 95
homosexuality. The 1905 edition of the well-known encyclopedia *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon* noted in its entry on homosexuality:

> Male homosexuals are often highly refined, aesthetically cultivated people, who come from all circles of society. Their inclination to the same sex is often purely ideal and many live a chaste life. They stress that they are to be considered as biologically healthy and not ethically inferior.\(^{200}\)

This quote highlights the dilemma faced by members of the GdE. Without doubt they saw themselves as “aesthetically cultivated” individuals, but in order to distinguish themselves from the era’s popular conception of homosexuality, they would have to explain what was unique about their own aesthetic sensibilities.

This would prove to be a difficult challenge because the visual was granted a powerful role in the period’s reigning theories of sexuality. Whether reading the work of Hirschfeld or Krafft-Ebing, desire was depicted as originating within an individual as the result of biological or psychological factors that conditioned a physical response to stimuli. In each of their explanations of sexual attraction, the visual could also play a critical role in initiating desire. But the power of the visual was strictly catalytic in nature and secondary to the more powerful physiological or psychological responses it triggered.

Hirschfeld’s book *Vom Wesen der Liebe* (Of the nature of love; 1906) provided an excellent example of the biological explanation for desire. In the chapter “*Die Stadien der Liebe*” (The stages of love), Hirschfeld attempted to differentiate between three phases of sexual attraction. As he explained, attraction began with an initial sensory experience triggered by sight, smell, or the sound of a voice. “Erotic arousal,” the second phase, was

\(^{200}\) *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, vol. 9 (Leipzig, 1905), 526.
brought about by touch. In Hirschfeld's accounting, this was the result of the sudden retreat of hormones that left one pining for another caress. Finally, the third phase was marked by a transformation and elevation of the personality through acts of altruism and sacrifice. It was only the third phase that could be considered to lead to true love and sexual attraction.201

To underscore his point, Hirschfeld described how transitioning from arousal (stage two) to true love (stage three) caused changes in the central nervous system that were similar to the effects of highly addictive narcotics such as morphine.202 The hormones that led to true love stimulated the autonomic nervous system to such a degree that reason and intellect were powerless to resist their intoxicating effects.203 As the potential catalyst for this powerful chain reaction, visuals occupied a rarified and somewhat menacing position.

In Hirschfeld’s depiction, the urban environment was filled with opportunities for such sensory stimulation and seductive distractions:

So it is, if we arrive at a party or board a trolley car. When one uses the train, one frequently seeks a rail car in which the eye notices a compelling [fesselnde], attractive figure. One sits so that it is possible to enjoy this pleasant view. On the stage, attention turns to those, to whom the senses respond best. And on the street we watch and observe again and again in the crowd, those who seem to us beautiful. The eye is drawn to these figures, and with it often the whole rest of the body follows.204

202 Ibid., 12.
203 Ibid., 20–21.
204 Ibid., 39.
Notably this power was not merely confined to the sight of a beautiful body; artwork could likewise be a conveyor of the erotic. Hirschfeld continued:

Also images, photographs, sculpture, and illustrations, can transmit this slightly erotic pleasurable sensation. It is not correct, as is often said, that a beautiful woman has the same effect on a homosexual as a beautiful painting. (As one wrote recently: “I am quite happy to entertain ladies when they are not desperate to be married or overly flirty. Sexually, I view a woman as an artwork, a marble statue.”) It would be more precise to say, [the woman has an effect on the homosexual] like a beautiful landscape, a beautiful waterfall, an elaborate building. A characteristic response is one that I once received from an urnischer student when I asked him whether he would not find a beautiful girl pretty. “Yes,” he replied, “like a beautiful horse.”

In both of Hirschfeld’s examples—beauty embodied in the living or the artistic—the visual was given a potent, but circumscribed role.

Hirschfeld later returned to the unique power of visual art in Geschlechtskunde (Sexual knowledge; 1926–30), a massive five-volume compendium of thirty years of his research into sexuality. Hirschfeld devoted an entire 903-page tome to images illustrating his theories. Writing in the introduction, Hirschfeld noted that people were unquestionably more attracted to images than to other types of media, no matter one’s educational level, class, or sex.

Members of the GdE certainly did not deny the powerful nature of the visual. But they strongly disputed the notion that the sight of a beautiful body or the apprehension of a work of art could potentially condemn a helpless viewer to a series of bodily reactions. As we have already seen, Kupffer praised the most masculine of men as those who could

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205 Ibid.
“live out [their] drives,” but avoid an “excess of sensual pleasure” through “repeated, voluntary limitation and restraint.”

Furthermore, they strongly disagreed that what one felt while gazing at the truly beautiful could or should be scientifically quantified. To reduce the power of beauty to the calculated secretions of a few glands and autonomic physiological reactions entirely missed the point. As Benedict Friedlaender wrote:

Sunk in pensive contemplation before a Venus or before an Adonis, whether of stone, metal, or of flesh and blood . . . what goes through him? He enjoys the “beauty”; a power very indefinite, difficult to analyze further, possibly darker, but very strong emotions pervade his feelings. What’s this? Here we come, it seems, not very far with physiological observation. The affected sensory organ is, however, the eye. Shall we therefore classify this effect as a visual stimulus? . . . We find our own, specifically human, physical being, in another individual and in fully “normal,” youthfully beautiful and blooming expression [Ausprägung]. And this awakens unanalyzable feelings of joy, pleasure, desire, indeed a kind of rapture. This is the point where, it seems to me, language fails and communication in clear terms is not possible.

It is this very moment—where language and, indeed scientific inquiry fail—that held the most power to transform an individual, and indeed society.

In attempting to counter Hirschfeld’s biological explanations for attraction, GdE members expanded on their previously discussed notions of universal bisexuality, to argue that there were also fundamental, universal aspects of beauty. In their representation, the male body was the pinnacle of such beauty—a truth that had endured in human history beginning with antiquity, was briefly revived during the Renaissance,

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207 Kupffer, Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe, 4.
208 Friedlaender, Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios, 1908, 119.
but otherwise had been lost to the modern era through centuries of clerical intervention and social suppression of individual freedom.  

In their veneration of male beauty, the most refined and inspiring form was that of the young man. In 1903, Otto Kiefer published in consecutive issues of Der Eigene a series of essays that traced the artistic representation of boys through art history to the present day. He concluded that such art flourished in times when society allowed the most personal freedom, but that the present era “with its ‘ideal’ of jingoism [Hurrapatriotismus] and its bigotry is in the final analysis to blame for why we have no Praxiteles, no Michaelangelo.” This was a call and a need for the GdE and others who “recognize Eros’s banner of beauty” to fight for a “purified religion and belief in beauty.”

In attempting to articulate a universal conception of beauty, the GdE joined the long and storied tradition of discussions about aesthetics in German intellectual history, notably including Winckelmann, Goethe, and Lessing and continuing through Hegel. For the GdE, Winckelmann was the undisputed polestar for modern efforts to revive classical aesthetics.

209 Ibid., 300.
211 Kiefer, Der schöne Jungling, 66.
212 For an excellent summary of the different responses of Winckelmann, Lessing, and Goethe to the Laocoön, see Chapter 3 in Richard Brilliant, My Laocoön: Alternative Claims in the Interpretation of Artworks (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 50–61.
Several key concepts for the GdE’s own appreciation of art can be directly traced to Winckelmann’s *Geschichte*. In that work, he famously praised the *Apollo Belvedere* as “the highest ideal of art among the works of antiquity.” In keeping with eighteenth-century standards of beauty, Winckelmann was enamored with the statue’s sensuous beauty and erotic representation of masculinity. But he found it especially praiseworthy in that it lacked the muscular, chiseled lines that characterized other classical representations of gods such as Zeus.  

Instead, the Apollo was, “An eternal spring, as in happy Elysium, wearing the charming manliness of maturity with pleasing youthfulness and plays with soft tenderness on the proud edifice of his limbs.” In addition to lauding the statue’s youthful poise and energetic tension, Winckelmann also described how the mere sight of the statue captured made him oblivious to all other distractions. “At the sight of this marvel of art, I forget everything else. And I take an elevated status so as to gaze upon it with reverence.”

Winckelmann’s appreciation for art suffused with eroticism and his belief that the male body was the height of human beauty were just the beginning of his influence on the GdE. He also represented an irrepressible, specifically German mentality that had no patience with ornamentation and artificiality—qualities ascribed to French art and

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213 For a discussion of Winckelmann and the erotic relationship between viewer and classical statuary, see Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 39–42.
215 Ibid., 310; For a psychoanalytic reading of Winckelmann’s response as a viewer, see Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 118–31, here 127.
culture. Kiefer, in his own art historical examination, noted that the “German spirit” brought forth in both Winckelmann and Lessing a “healthy reaction against the French morbid notion of gallantry” and turned them to the wonders of the “man-loving” Hellenes.\(^{217}\)

Of course, the search for ideal forms can be traced back to Plato and was most famously expressed in the German context in Goethe’s essays on the subject.\(^{218}\) But at the turn of the twentieth century, this thread of aesthetic inquiry was seen to be the domain of natural science. The great German naturalist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel was profoundly inspired by such ideals while he pursued morphology as a method to reconstruct the evolutionary history of life on earth.\(^{219}\) But the very association with scientific inquiry made direct discussions of such notions largely anathema in the pages of *Der Eigene*. Underscoring this perceived distance, Haeckel’s interest in evolutionary biology proved highly attractive to Hirschfeld, who eagerly published an article from Haeckel on sex changes in the 1912 *WhK Jahrbuch*.\(^{220}\) He also later published an exchange of correspondence between Haeckel and the renowned Swiss psychiatrist and

\(^{217}\) Kiefer, *Der schöne Jungling*, 55–56.


\(^{219}\) Christoph Kockerbeck, *Die Schönheit des Lebendigen: ästhetische Naturwahrnehmung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 94–95; For Goethe’s argument that symmetry makes mammals the highest, most developed of physiological forms, see Goethe, *Die Schriften zur Naturwissenschaft*, 10:74.

\(^{220}\) For more about Hirschfeld’s interest in Haeckel’s research, see Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld: Leben und Werk*, 44.
neurologist Auguste Forel on sexology. In a gesture of friendly collegiality, Haeckel also contributed to a special Festschrift issue in honor of Hirschfeld’s fiftieth birthday.221

But instead of following this intellectual path, the aesthetic ideals of many GdE members were clearly indebted to Hegel, who had also been influenced by Winckelmann. Hegel’s wide-ranging writings on aesthetics were not directly referenced in Der Eigene, but certain key concepts clearly provide a basis for the GdE’s pronouncements, as well as the formation of Kiefer’s art historical perspective. In particular, Hegel’s argument in his lectures on aesthetics that art’s most important role was to be a physical, sensuous representation of human freedom, fit companionably with the group’s embrace of Stirnerian concepts of personal expression. According to Hegel, pure sculptural beauty could be found in the fourth- and fifth-century Greek statutes of gods, which depicted the individual as animated by freedom, yet still serene and self-contained.222 This notion was notably echoed in Kiefer’s complaint that neoclassical art in the Enlightenment era was too beholden to empty formalism and therefore lacked any animating spirit.223

Furthermore, Hegel’s conception of art as a sensual manifestation of the Volksgeist was reflected in the writings of Kiefer and Kupffer when they protested that genuine beauty in art could only be realized and appreciated within cultures and societies

223 Kiefer, Der schöne Jungling, 59.
that afforded a maximum of personal freedom—essentially, each era received the art that it deserved. \(^{224}\) Lastly, Hegel’s veneration of art as of higher aesthetic quality and value than anything offered in nature, complemented the GdE’s high estimation of the arts and general disdain for the sciences. \(^{225}\)

In resisting the interests of the natural sciences in ideal forms, the GdE proffered a conception of beauty that was not subjective, and above all did not originate within the viewer as the result of biological imperatives or psychological forces. In *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, Benedict Friedlaender derisively dismissed the notion that an appreciation for male beauty was the consequence of a homosexual orientation:

> Whoever really admires a statue of Antinous or something similar and in his heart finds it “beautiful,” is said to have at least a part, but probably more than merely a part, of what is now known as the homosexual sex drive. And that it can be brought to life by external causes or the removal of certain inhibitions. . . . In any case, it is not said that every admirer of Antinous’s beauty must be carried away into sexual activities with members of the same sex.

And in a footnote on the same page:

> Let it not be that this statement was incorrect because it was not applicable to the beauty of, for example, a horse or even a landscape. Firstly, the specific charm [*Liebreiz*] of youth is a natural fact, against which all prudery is powerless. And second, the beauty of a landscape will never be understood by a child, a eunuch, or a woman in the manner of a man. Why else were all great painters men? \(^{226}\)

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\(^{226}\) Friedlaender, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, 1908, 87.
In dismissing homosexual desire as the cause of attraction to male bodies, Friedlaender and the cultural connoisseurs of the GdE were insistent that it was in fact their erudition, and, most importantly, their masculinity that allowed them to recognize and produce artistic works imbued with universal beauty. Or as a 1926 ad promoting Der Eigene’s tenth volume admonished, “Do not purchase kitsch from elsewhere that is disastrous to our cause.”

Instead, as Winckelmann had so poetically described, the truly beautiful could reach out and seize the viewer’s attention. One was helpless to resist such beauty and could ultimately be inspired to change one’s life. As historian James A. Schultz observed in his book about the tradition of courtly love in medieval literature, “Something about the object assaults the lover and takes him or her captive.”

It is a similar historical understanding of courtly love that points toward why the invented term of Lieblingminne—with its connotations of a minstrel singing lyric poetry (Minnesänger) in praise of a beloved—was of such profound importance to the GdE. A long tradition of lyrical praise flowering in the Middle Ages and carried forward through the Romantic era was not just an important historical precedent. Medieval notions of love

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227 Der Eigene 11, no. 6 (1926): inside back cover.
228 The transformative power of art was expressed powerfully in the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926). While he had no affiliation with the GdE or related groups, his interest nonetheless demonstrates the larger embrace of this notion within contemporary German society. In particular, his poem “The Archaic Torso of Apollo” (1908) described the overwhelming experiencing of viewing a classical sculpture so suffused with majestic beauty that though it was damaged and incomplete, the mere sight of it admonished the viewer, “You must change your life.” Rainer Maria Rilke, New Poems [1908]: The Other Part, trans. Edward A. Snow (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 230.
and desire also offered a tradition of praising one’s beloved without necessarily culminating in sexual activity. The inherent sexual threat contained in the GdE’s active promotion of pederastic relationships was if not muted, then at least subdued. By resituating the origins of desire and attraction from inside of the viewer to outside of the body, the discussion was thus turned away from issues of sexual identity to focus instead on rarified discussions of universal attributes of beauty.

While we have thus far examined the discourse related to the aesthetic pursuit of ideal forms and bodies, it is also worth noting the earlier history of attempts to craft specifically “German” bodies. The history of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852) and his Turnbewegung offers many important parallels and precedents for the GdE’s pursuits, including an interest in defining new ideal body types and developing practices which offered communion with a mystical, national German past.

Jahn and his popular Turnbewegung developed a form of modern gymnastics for training bodies as a practical, patriotic response to Prussia’s decisive defeat to Napoleon in 1806. In Jahn’s concept of Turnen, the sport and German nationalism were inseparable and one cannot be understood without the other. In fact, his teachings were almost always paired with speeches he delivered calling for the unification of Germany.

Turnvater Jahn, as he remains more commonly known, published Deutsches Volksthum (The German Nationality) in 1810. In this volume, he programmatically outlined his view of nationalism and the liberation of the fatherland. Then in 1816, he published Die Deutsche Turnkunst (The German Art of Turnen). This second book called
for a rigorous physical training of youth as a patriotic education for the coming liberation of Germany from French occupying armies. He meticulously outlined plans for setting up a *Turnplatz* (training field) and included the design for much of the equipment still in use in gymnastics today. *Turnen* served as a practical education in Jahn’s concepts of a unified and strong German nation. Together the two books formed a total critique of and a total solution for resistance to the French forces of occupation in Germany.

Even though the *Turnen* movement shared numerous goals with national and democratic movements of the era (such as, liberation from French domination, the unifying of separate states into a German nation state, and an end to feudal order), it is quite important to note that Jahn was not interested in establishing a democratic state or organization. This is best observed in his conception of *Volk*. In Jahn’s description the *Volk* represent a community of people based on a mystical notion of belonging together, which was opposed to the modern, enlightened idea of a state as a social contract. A *Volk* differed from other nations through bodily, spiritual, and moral traits that were woven into the fabric of the nation.  

In a similar fashion, *Turnen* was given a high place in Jahn’s national thinking. And he carefully invested *Turnen* with both a linguistic and historic weight: *Turn* as an ancient German word, *Turnen* as a long lost relic of the past, and a *Turner* as an adventurer doing knightly deeds.  

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231 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, *Die Deutsche Turnkunst* (Berlin, 1816), xxvii–xxxii.
movement, Jahn noted with great pride that “all able-bodied Turners had volunteered for battle on their own free will” once Prussia reentered the Napoleonic Wars in 1813.\footnote{Ibid., 28–29.}

As Jahn noted, “Knowing about Turnen from mere hearsay and observation is like the blind writing about colors.”\footnote{Ibid., 31.} Participation was fundamental to understanding it and to its success. Notably it was the gaining of discipline through reason that led to voluntary integration into the community and subordination to a leader.\footnote{G. Pfister, “Physical Activity in the Name of the Fatherland: Turnen and the National Movement (1810-1820),” \textit{Sporting Heritage: Journal of the Association of Sports Historians} 1 (1996): 29.} While Jahn actively criticized the educational establishment as rigidly conservative, highly authoritarian and intrinsically elitist, this approach did not make the Turnen movement a force for popular democracy. Instead, it operated in quasi-mystical terms where it was not uncommon for Turners to refer to themselves as “born again,” and to adopt the Jahnian uniform and style to mark their transition from a life of heavy drinking to one of puritanical rigueur.\footnote{For more on this topic, see the memoirs of two of Jahn’s converts Heinrich Leo and Max Rüder. Both are quoted from extensively in Roland Ray Lutz, “‘Father’ Jahn and His Teacher-Revolutionaries from the German Student Movement,” \textit{The Journal of Modern History} 48, no. 2, On-Demand Supplement (June 1976): 1–34.}

Jahn repeatedly asserts throughout \textit{Deutsche Turnkunst} that paramilitary drills and exercises are prohibited at the Turnplatz. Some historians have used these statements, and Jahn’s rhetorical overlapping with democratic movements of the era, to underscore
investment of *Turnen* movement in individuality, independence, and initiative.\textsuperscript{236} Yet the movement did not call itself a democratic society. Jahn’s writings illustrate that he was only interested in individuality and independence in a limited form—as far as those traits brought someone into the movement. But once within the movement, followers demonstrated Jahn’s teachings and were expected to unquestionably follow the “father.” As much as Jahn resisted the rigorously controlled Prussian education system it seemed to be inspired more out of a conflict with his own hierarchical program than from any burning democratic impulse.

The völkish, conservative, and patriarchal ideology of the *Turnen* movement proved incredibly durable and popular. Owing to the notorious dedication and zeal of its followers, *Turnen* was incorporated into standardized school curriculums beginning around mid-nineteenth century and became the dominant form of physical education in primary schools throughout Germany. An extensive national network of clubs and leagues also offered social forums and continued practice in the sport.\textsuperscript{237}

This brief history of the *Turnbewegung* is important to keep in mind when viewing the GdE’s own attempts at establishing a popular movement. Unlike other contemporary artistic groups—such as the insulated and aloof philosophical circle surrounding Stefan George—the GdE regularly acknowledged contemporary social tastes

\textsuperscript{236} Arguments framing the Turner movement as chiefly democratic in origin and intention can be found in Lutz, “‘Father’ Jahn and His Teacher Revolutionaries” and Horst Ueberhorst and Wolfgang Stump, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and His Time: 1778-1852* (Munich: Moos, 1982).

and political debate. The GdE was not explicitly interested in promoting sports as a way to a healthier German nation, but Brand nonetheless had an abiding interest in the fashionable physical-fitness practices of the day: sunbathing, nature excursions, and open-air exercise.

By the 1920s, Brand explicitly linked those practices to improving the racial health of the German people. He promoted an exercise practice that was rigorous, but did not “degrade men to machine” so that the “pleasure of each individual and the joy of our whole people rises through physical strength and beauty.” Specifically, Brand attempted to use those pursuits, in combination with his published photography work, to attract like-minded sexual comrades and also reach out to a broader public. And similar to the early *Turnbewegung*, he deliberately deployed concepts of individuality as a route to greater moral, spiritual, and bodily improvement—all the while steering the group in a fundamentally conservative manner.

As an editorial aesthetic practice, this meant that the painting and photography published in *Der Eigene* was confined to a limited set of thematic elements: idyllic escapes into nature, traditions of courtly love and German knighthood, and reproductions of classical sculpture. The remainder of this chapter will examine how those themes and the aesthetic and physical ideals discussed above were represented in the paintings of Kupffer, the photography of Brand, and the illustrations of Fidus.

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Kupffer and the Ideal Male Form

More than any other member of the GdE, Élisâr von Kupffer was an essentialist in his quest to define and present the ideal male form. As a self-styled “philosopher-painter” [Maler-philosoph], Kupffer embarked on his search through hundreds of large-scale oil paintings, watercolors, and photographs. His artwork was an essential way to visualize his religious beliefs and social reform concepts. And as Kupffer wrote, art had an additional role to play in instructing a broader public about concepts of beauty. “Our hypocrisy has born bad fruit. Art has an important task: the refinement and purification of the senses.”

The official catalog of Kupffer’s work recognizes over 180 paintings, completed primarily between 1905 and 1930. In that period, he came to two conclusions. First, androgynous bodies, as representations of the best aspects of both sexes, were the highest form of beauty. And second, his own body was the closest approximation of this ideal. In light of Kupffer’s early hyper-masculine manifesto, his eventual reverence for androgynous bodies was a remarkable distance from his initial writings.

Near the end of his life, Kupffer maintained, “The struggle for beauty elevated me to martyrdom. It brought me later many blind enemies, but also friends who were convinced.” And while he claimed to have experienced public disdain and scorn for his paintings, the influences for his visual style were drawn from well-known and respected

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239 Kupffer, Aus einem wahrhaften Leben, 283.
240 Ibid., 75; italics in the original.
sources. Above all, Kupffer relied on the theories of that other great essentialist of ideal bodies, Winckelmann.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Winckelmann associated the androgyne with a higher category of aesthetic virtue. In his estimation, the male body was the highest form of beauty, but the figure of the androgyne was an embodiment of the universal and therefore a future-oriented, “not yet realized” form of masculinity. Specifically, he identified the pubescent boy as sexually ambivalent and consequently the exemplary representation of the ancient Greek ideal of beauty:

The highest notion of youthful beauty was realized in the figures of Bacchus and Apollo. In the images left to us, these deities show, by the virtue of the union of the two sexes given to them by the poets, a mixed and ambiguous nature. Through the body’s full and strongly pronounced hips and through the delicate and rounded limbs, the form approaches that of eunuchs and women.

In this manner, Winckelmann propagated a neoclassical visual language that he thought could transcend contemporaneous formal representations because it comprised androgynous physical characteristics. To him, those androgynous characteristics were transformative of art and morality.

The Prussian philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) was also interested in the form of the androgyne. In his essay “Über männliche und weibliche...”

241 Mechthild Fend, Grenzen der Männlichkeit: der Androgyn in der französischen Kunst und Kunsttheorie 1750–1830 (Berlin: Reimer, 2003), 103.
242 Ibid., 8.
Form” (About masculine and feminine form; 1795), he explored the nature of gender in the context of natural philosophy.\(^{244}\) He identified the main motivation for representing hermaphroditic figures in ancient Greek culture as the “need for beauty,” [Bedürfnis nach Schönheit] which is to be found wherever male strength and the grace of feminine forms were not yet united.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the imprimatur of either Winckelmann or Humboldt was a useful way to introduce art with homoerotic and homosexual themes to a larger public. This effort included Ludwig Frey, who published in 1896 a 350-page art-historical examination of the aesthetics of the male body in world history and culture. He also contributed to the WhK’s *Jahrbuch* from 1899 to 1905. He was supposedly a physician active at the periphery of Freud’s interests in psychiatry and hypnotism—and one who also dabbled with the biological theory of galvanism, exploring the therapeutic use of electricity to stimulate muscles. But his identity has never been confirmed.\(^{245}\)

For Frey, the *Uurning* was not merely an intermediate being between man and woman, but rather he occupied an ideal position between the poles of active production (male) and passive reception (female). Frey identified this “hermaphroditism of the soul” [Seelenhermaphroditismus] as of the utmost advantage for artistic production.\(^{246}\)

Even the *Uranian* stands between the pathologically abnormal and normal healthy people. By having a large portion of the sex characteristics from man and woman,
he is a dual being, with all its disadvantages, but also all of its benefits. To his nature, he combines productivity with receptivity, timeliness, and sensitivity, so that he has not only the sexual instincts, but also the rest of the qualities of the psyche not covered by the outward expression of sexuality.\textsuperscript{247}

The uniquely dual perspective of the Urning was beguiling to other contemporary commentators as well. The famous Jewish physician Wilhelm Fliess (1858–1928) romanticized artistic representations of androgyny, noting that artists occupied an interim realm [Zwischenreich] of hermaphroditic refinement.\textsuperscript{248} Fliess was Sigmund Freud’s closest friend—they first met one another in 1887 and then began a series of personal meetings and correspondence—and an important contributor to the early development of psychoanalysis. Similar to Fliess, Leo Berg (1862–1908) described artists in his book Geschlechter (The sexes; 1906) as occupying the “highest mental and physical developmental stage of the individual.”\textsuperscript{249} The masculine and feminine qualities of each artist affected the quality of art produced.\textsuperscript{250} According to Berg, since art could only flourish in bisexual souls, the best artists were usually not one-sided sexual figures.\textsuperscript{251}

Similar concepts of androgyny could also be found in an essay published by the Dutch physician Lucien Sophie Albert Marie von Römer (1873–1965) in the 1903 edition of the WhK’s Jahrbuch.\textsuperscript{252} Using a combination of ethnographic sources and religious-historical texts, Römer published “Über die androgynische Idee des Lebens” (About the

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 23–24.
\textsuperscript{248} Wilhelm Fliess, Vom Leben und vom Tod (Jena: Diederichs, 1916), 73. Thanks to Jonathan Steinberg for reminding me to properly note Fliess’ contributions to psychoanalysis.
\textsuperscript{249} Leo Berg, Geschlechter (Berlin: Hüpeden & Merzyn, 1906), 62.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 52.
androgynous idea of life). Römer came to the conclusion that the human desire for full harmony, discovered and elaborated upon by the greatest of artists, is frequently achieved to greatest effect by Uranier. Furthermore, artistic representations of boys were particularly well suited to illustrate androgyny. “The boy possesses a delicate, nearly girl-like body, that passive symbol of strength [Kraft-Symbol], and the male genitals, the active, procreating symbol of strength.”

Within this context, Élisàr von Kupffer’s paintings of nude male figures championed the androgynous. Young men were depicted with broad hips, rosy cheeks, and distinctly fleshy bodies lacking muscle tone. The accepted sexual dimorphism was blurred into a recognizably male form with strikingly softened features. In explaining why he was unable to work with female models, Kupffer wrote late in his life, “The female body did not correspond to the same harmony of the body of a handsome young man. It would lend an earthly discordance to my ideal creations. Rather, my own body would be, even now, closest to this ideal of beauty.” And he would appear as that ideal in almost every painting that he completed.

As mentioned earlier, Kupffer derived a lifetime of artistic inspiration from a boy, Adolf Schmitz, whom he first met and painted when Schmitz was twelve. Of the many charms he later enumerated about the boy, Kupffer’s prizing of his androgyny was most prominent. Indeed, Kupffer was proud that so many people who viewed his first painted

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253 Ibid., 921.
254 Kupffer, Aus einem wahrhaften Leben, 320; see also 79.
portrait of Schmitz mistook the child for a girl. As Kupffer recalled of him later, “Such beauty and charm transcends gender.”

The majority of Kupffer’s work was primarily made up of self-portraiture or by using himself to represent religious or allegorical figures. At times, he would also employ younger models who shared a close resemblance to his own physical features. This overt narcissism reached its apex in his largest work, *Die Klarwelt der Seligen* (The clear world of the blessed; 1923–30). This monumental, eighty-two-foot-long mural was designed for the inner sanctum of his personal temple in Minusio, Switzerland. It featured eighty-four young men frolicking in thirty-three figure groups through landscapes depicting each of the four seasons. An overwhelming majority of those young men possessed Kupffer’s same facial features. The mural contained so many elements, that it required explanation through an extended poem, published after Kupffer’s death as a pamphlet available for temple visitors.

Specifically, the *Klarwelt* was a mystical realm in which humanity transcended the sexes and entered into the “Kingdom of Eros,” where one is “reborn as a god.” Attaining the *Klarwelt* was the ultimate goal of *Klarismus*—an esoteric belief system created by Kupffer and his life-long partner Eduard von Mayer beginning in 1900. It was

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255 Ibid., 271.
256 Ibid., 304, 308.
257 Minusio is a small municipality located in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino. It is approximately two kilometers east of the center of the neighboring, larger municipality of Locarno.
258 Two paintings from Kupffer—*Der Neue Bund* (1915/1916) and *Amor Dei Victoria* (1917) were reproduced as illustrations of narcissism in Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde*, 4:398–99.
formalized through the establishment of a *Klaristen* society in Weimar in 1911 and then in Zürich in 1913. Conceived as a religion, its tenets were a rejection of materialism. In addition, it was a conscious reaction against the growing popularity of monism in the German-speaking world during the same time period.  

In particular, Kupffer was reacting against a form of naturalistic monism proposed by the naturalist Ernst Haeckel, who envisioned a unity of matter and spirit that mirrored the unity he saw in natural science. Haeckel also promoted a form of naturalistic monism that proposed a unity of matter and spirit that mirrored the unity he saw in natural science. He published these views in his popular book *Die Welträthsel* (The Riddle of the Universe; 1899) and then promoted them through the German Monist League established in 1906.

Far from Haeckel’s unified understanding of the universe, a foundational tenet of *Klarismus* was the need to transcend the world’s current depraved and chaotic state (called the *Wirrwelt*) in order to reach a higher state of being. Helping humanity transition from the *Wirrwelt* (the confused, depraved world) to the *Klarwelt* (the clear world) was central to the faith’s beliefs. By Kupffer’s reckoning, this transformation could be achieved over the course of three generations.  

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261 Élisàr von Kupffer (writing as Elisarion), “Was ist Klarismus?,” *Religion und Geisteskultur* 7, no. 4 (1913): 2–3; See also the main religious text of *Klarismus*, *Ein neuer Flug und eine Heilige Burg* (Munich: Verlag Akropolis, 1911).

In Kupffer’s paintings, the representative figure of this higher state of being was the Araphrodite. Just as the Greek mythological figure Hermaphroditus was the child of Hermes and Aphrodite, the Araphrodite was explained within Klarismus as the child of Ares and Aphrodite. In Greek mythology, this child was known as Harmoneeia, but she was transfigured by Kupffer for the purposes of Klarismus into the androgyne Araphrodite:

And this experience of "harmony" — a connection that I have called the Araphrodite is not to be confused with the hermaphrodite. The latter is the more external connection between sexual characteristics of both sexes; the araphroditic arises from within as an intellectual and spiritual connection of the male and female beings, which also physically manifests itself at the intersection of power and grace.\(^{263}\)

Mayer clarified:

The Araphrodite does not call for female attire, although he highly appreciates beauty and jewelry. The saccharine and sentimental are foreign to him, but he views life with a pronounced lack of bitterness. . . . He is not a misogynist. As a man, he loves the graceful and womanly, including feminine sentiment. He esteems the womanly [Weibhaft]—he loves the reliable safety found in men, but he appreciates the manliness found in himself.\(^{264}\)

In both outward appearance and in inner development, the Araphrodite’s frequent appearance in Kupffer’s work beginning in 1911 demonstrated how far he had come from his earlier radical misogynistic pronouncements. There was certainly much less distance between Kupffer’s conceptions and the Urnings described by Hirschfeld as the third sex.

The painting Die Entwaffnung (The disarming; 1914) [Figure 1] is an excellent example of the way Kupffer used paintings to illustrate ideas central to his philosophical

\(^{263}\) Kupffer, *Aus einem wahrhaften Leben*, 78; italics in the original.

\(^{264}\) Mayer, *Das Mysterium der Geschlechter*, 18.
work. Set atop castle ramparts, the painting depicts a young knight in the process of having his chain mail removed by a naked androgyne, the Araphrodite, whose back is turned to the viewer. The androgyne clearly has Kupffer’s facial features and his naked body is positioned to accentuate the rounded hips and curves of his bared buttocks—the entire body is essentially one sinuous curve folded perfectly into the embrace of the knight.

The androgyne’s right hand removes the knight’s glove, while his left grips the hilt of a downward pointing sword. In the immediate background, a red banner featuring a white flower hangs behind the two figures. Further in the distance, a classical Greek temple can be seen atop a hill in the upper-left corner of the painting. A second fortified castle towers atop a mountain peak in the upper right. The entire composition is rendered in the soft pastel colors that dominate the palette of almost all of Kupffer’s work.

The painting captured at one glance the notions of duality and contrast so critical to Kupffer as an artist and philosopher. The warmly hued body of the androgyne contrasted with the cooler blues of the knight’s chain mail. Furthermore, his soft features and delicate arms differed from the more traditional representation of masculinity presented by the knight.

Kupffer prided himself on the accessibility of the symbolism in his compositions and religious tenets. “These beliefs should be clear, not ‘occult’ and full of secrecy . . . therefore, this word [Klar].”\footnote{Kupffer (writing as Elisarion), “Was ist Klarismus?,” 1; italics in the original.} In most images, these symbols can be understood fairly
easily. In this particular image, sensuality is represented in the form of the androgyne. The holy spear of Parsifal has been rendered as the sword of **Klarismus** and the Christian knight into the knight of **Klarismus**. And the prominent banner with flower blossom, a frequently recurring symbol in the belief system, represented the flowering of the divine.

This painting, and many others like it, were part of a collection assembled and thoughtfully arranged within the temple in Minusio. The end effect was a type of Stations of the Cross, to be visited in a specific order to prepare the visitor to enter the rotunda and view the monumental mural of **Die Klarwelt**. That preparatory process involved visiting several paintings including, *Amor Dei Victoria* (1917) [Figure 2]. The Araphrodite appears again as a central figure, this time accompanied by a Greek warrior. Strength and grace, the two most important characteristics of the Araphrodite, are personified in their depiction.

Mayer described this work as “the occult taking the shape [**Gestaltwerdung**] of the two primal phases of beings.” The warrior, described as a “young hero in ancient garments,” wanted to bring beauty closer. According to Mayer, the rhythmic interplay of the symbolic colors light blue and pink represented the yearning-filled fusion process intrinsic to the path of enlightenment prescribed by **Klarismus**.

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266 For further discussion, see the interpretations in Ricci, *Ritter, Tod und Eros*, 177–78; Keilson-Lauritz, *Geschichte der Geschichte*, 284.


268 Also reproduced as image no. 543 in Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde*, 4:399.
Two additional figures, floating in the upper-left background of the painting, represented the ultimate fusion of grace and strength that occurs under the direction of Eros. Returning again to Mayer, these figures of light [Lichgestalten] were to be shining representations of union and freedom, as well as the overcoming of carnal sexuality. The rhythmic nature of the painting [Rhythmisierung] with its doubling and twining, accentuated by the reflective presence of a mirror, was to capture the “oscillating back and forth, seeking nature of these spirits.”

Kupffer’s increasing devotion to his own idiosyncratic religious beliefs seems to have left him with little time or interest in publishing in Der Eigene after 1903. A single poem from him appeared in 1904, before publication ceased in 1906. After publication resumed in 1919, only two additional poems and a single article on Klarismus were published. Instead, Kupffer focused on churning out paintings that appeared to better illustrate his beliefs than any prose ever could—all the while trusting, relying, and insisting on the primacy of painting to communicate deeper than any other medium.

**Brand’s Utopian Escapes**

Brand opened the second year of *Der Eigene* with a prologue, which he subsequently reprinted twice with the title “Islands of Eros”:

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We are looking for own land, the land of our inclination [Neigung], the shores of
the new man, the realm of the soul, the world of our pain and our joys. We
launched our ships from the shores of reality and went with singing harps toward
secret forebodings in the endless blue expanses, to the quiet islands that bloom at
the boundaries of the sexes in a heavenly beauty, to the place where the glistening
firn of blessed friendship beckoned! 272

In these opening lines, Brand captured the qualities that would also guide the aesthetics
of his photography: escape, timelessness, and spiritual transcendence.

In many ways, Brand’s hometown of Friedrichshagen met those ideals for him.
Easily accessible from Berlin, the town was established by Friederich the Great.
Beginning as a home for resettled Bohemian cotton spinners in the mid-eighteenth
century, it became a favored day-trip destination for Berliners a hundred years later. This
was thanks to a newly established regional rail connection with the capital and, more
importantly, its location along the shores of Berlin’s largest lake, Müggelsee. By 1880,
the town’s Kurpark was an additional draw for those seeking reprieve from the rapidly
growing and dusty city. 273

Brand spent most of his life living in either Friedrichshagen or in Neu-Rahnsdorf,
two stops farther down the rail line. In the 1890s, the Deutsche Volksbau company
transformed this traditional fishing village into a model villa colony with approximately
forty homes. Subsequently renamed Wilhelmshagen in 1902, it offered access to both the
lake and the immense stretches of pine forest surrounding the city. In an advertisement in

Literatur 4, no. 5 (May 1903): 293–95; and again “Inseln des Eros,” Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für
Freundschaft und Freiheit 7, no. 1 (November 15, 1919).
273 Andrea Natke, Der Kurpark Friedrichshagen, 2nd ed., Friedrichshagener Hefte 2 (Berlin:
the back of an 1898 issue of *Der Eigene*, Brand offered summer rentals of a residence in Neu-Rahnsdorf, calling it “one of the most promising of Berlin’s eastern suburbs.”

Brand’s start as an avid photographer can be readily identified by a small advertisement that appeared in the back of *Der Eigene* in the beginning of 1905. He announced the establishment of a photography studio and his desire to buy “mats, carpets, blankets, vases, guitars, mandolins, Greek and oriental costumes, sandals, weapons, antlers, goblets, and drinking horns”—objects common to many German portrait studios of the era, and frequently used as elements in Kupffer’s paintings as well.

Brand’s first credited photograph was not published in *Der Eigene* until later in 1906. But in the long period from 1907–1918 when *Der Eigene* was not published, Brand developed a recognizable style that was crucial to the journal’s visual appeal in the new issues appearing in 1919. In particular, his photography became the primary element of each cover, replacing the earlier reliance on text or illustration.

Despite Brand’s avowed early interest in studio photography, the vast watery expanses afforded by the glacial lakes surrounding Berlin became a unifying background element in his portraiture [Figures 3 & 4]. His preferred to depict young men, typically alone, in sculptural poses within vistas denuded of any temporal or national context. In

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274 “Neu-Rahnsdorf,” *Der Eigene: Monatsschrift für Kunst und Leben* 2, no. 2 (September 1898): advertising supplement.
this regard, his photographs functioned less as representations of ideal bodies, and more as homoerotic visions of German men in timeless settings. This view is confirmed by Brand’s offering for sale portfolios of male nudes, similar to what appeared on the covers of Der Eigene, with the titles Rasse und Schönheit (Race and Beauty) and Deutsche Rasse (The German Race).

When viewed in the context of the GdE’s advocation for pedagogical eros, Brand’s photographs were also spaces where there was no sense of parental or social control. The viewer can imagine himself there and not feel threatened by outside forces. Each photograph’s straining push for the timeless was nonetheless shaped by the very real cultural pressures, social constraints, and legal restrictions of the time period. Keeping in mind Brand’s previous brush with censorship authorities, his reliance on scenes that evoked or directly quoted classical sculpture provided a convenient, socially acceptable set of visual tropes within which to depict the GdE’s more subversive interests. Nudism or reveling in the beauty of young men were no longer quite as alienating for the average Bürger when viewed as part of the classical Greek tradition.

In addition, distributing magazines, postcards, or photography portfolios featuring male nudes could be done with a diminished threat of censorship, particularly if the depictions were based on famous Greek statuary or artwork. For instance, Brand’s

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277 Deutsche Rasse is described as including ten artistic prints in Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit 7, no. 1 (November 15, 1919): advertising supplement. Two nudes from Rasse und Schönheit were issued as a supplement to Der Eigene 11, no. 1 (January 1926). An ad at the back of that issue describes the portfolio as “eight nude and dance photographs.” A second edition of Rasse und Schönheit is advertised in Der Eigene 11, no. 2 (February 1926): facing 48.
photograph for a 1926 cover of Der Eigene offered a “living” representation of the
Hellenistic sculpture Boy with Thorn [Figure 5]. A young boy was depicted with one leg
artfully raised so as to remove a thorn from the sole of his foot, mimicking the bronze
original on display in Rome and its many marble copies throughout Europe. The original
had been invoked by Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) in his famous 1810 essay, “Über
das Marionettentheater” (On the Marionette Theater) and remained popular through the
Wilhelmine era. Hirschfeld reported that small reproductions could be found in many
middle-class households and the homes of gay men. By photographing young models
in poses from recognizable statuary, Brand could use Germany’s persistent philhellenism
as yet another way to introduce and gain broader acceptance of the GdE’s ideals in
society. But instead, in the lead up to the First World War and as the early days of the
Weimar Republic brought disappointment and social upheaval, Brand would increasingly
turn to nationalistic rhetoric, as we shall see in the final chapter.

Fidus and the Fallen World

At the turn of the twentieth century, few other living German painters were as
popular as Hugo Höppner (1868–1948). And few have experienced such a rapid
reversal in public opinion. Already falling out of favor by the early 1920s, his name has

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278 Hirschfeld, Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes, 66.
279 For discussions of Fidus’s life, see Jost Hermand, Der Schein des schönen Lebens: Studien zur
Jahrhundertwende (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum-Verlag, 1972), 55–146; Janos Frecot, Johann
Friedrich Geist, and Diethart Kerbs, Fidus 1868–1948: zur ästhetischen Praxis bürgerlicher
Fluchtbewegungen (Hamburg: Rogner und Bernhard, 1972); Rolf-Peter Janz, “Die Faszination
der Jugend durch Rituale und sakrale Symbole. Mit Anmerkungen zu Fidus, Hesse,
Hofmannsthals und George,” in “Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit”: der Mythos Jugend, ed. Thomas
Koebner, Rolf-Peter Janz, and Frank Trommler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 310–37;
as noted by Keilson-Lauritz, none of Fidus’s work for Der Eigene appeared in Frecot’s
exhaustive list of the artist’s published artwork, although this volume remains the standard work.
since become synonymous with kitsch better dismissed and forgotten. Born in the northern German town of Lübeck, he left his art studies at the Munich Akademie in 1887 to devote his life to fellow painter, avid nudist, and nature enthusiast Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach (1851–1913). For the next two years, Höppner served as a devoted helper and follower of Diefenbach, who rewarded him with the name “Fidus” (faithful).²⁸⁰

In the 1870s, Diefenbach had survived a severe typhus infection, treating himself through a combination of natural remedies and strict adherence to a meat-free diet. He then began a peripatetic existence preaching a romantic-utopian, anti-capitalist vision throughout Germany before founding a commune outside of Munich in 1886. Höppner joined a year later, but despite the close relationship with his mentor, Diefenbach permanently ended the friendship in 1899 after a falling-out—a frequent fate for many of Diefenbach’s closest relationships. As one contemporary profile of Diefenbach noted, out of his mouth came, “just resentment, disgust, and a grubbing around and glorifying in his own martyrdom, as is often found in nature-enthusiasts whose ambition and hope have suffered.”²⁸¹ Höppner returned to the Akademie, finishing his studies in the summer of 1892. For the rest of this life, he retained the artistic name bestowed by Diefenbach, as well as the older artist’s primary stylistic influences: art-nouveau and symbolism.

In the fall of 1892, Fidus moved to Berlin to follow the head of the German theosophist movement, Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden (1846–1916). Hübbe-Schleiden was also publisher of Sphinx, a magazine devoted not only to theosophy, but against all

²⁸⁰ Hermand, Der Schein des schönen Lebens, 59.
materialism and the naturalism of Darwin and Haeckel. *Sphinx* was wide-ranging and eclectic in its interests. For instance, the March 1893 issue managed to offer articles about the Egyptian pyramids, “living one’s highest ideal,” the music of Islam, “the science of magic,” elves, and the divisions separating the divine, astral, and natural worlds. Through 1894, Fidus contributed illustrations to the magazine, introducing him to additional inspirations and symbols that became permanent parts of his artwork.

One of those influences included the clairvoyant investigations published by the prominent British theosophists Annie Besant (1847–1933) and Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854–1934). Fidus found inspiration in images in their book, *Thoughtforms* (1901), as well as Leadbeater’s *Man Visible and Invisible* (1902). He also picked up an abiding love of the lotus blossom, characterized by Hübbe-Schleichen as the ancient Egypt and Indian symbol for the blooming of divinity within mankind. There was also a fondness for the white-robed priests, “lotus maidens,” and heavenly rays of light mentioned in a book by Mabel Collins (1851–1927), *Idyll of the White Lotus* (1890), and published with a German translation in serial form in *Sphinx* in 1894.

Fidus was actually never a devoted theosophist, he just frankly never met a reform movement that didn’t capture his imagination. His own beliefs and stylistic influences

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284 Hermand, *Der Schein des schönen Lebens*, 76.
made the eclecticism of *Sphinx* seem somewhat focused by comparison. Those all-encompassing interests allowed him to work steadily and with a variety of reform-minded publications and authors. In 1896 and 1897 he provided additional illustrations for the Munich-based magazine *Jugend* and continued to provide illustrations through 1914. After moving to Friedrichshagen in 1904, he completed numerous decorative illustrations for books by Bruno Wille, Wilhelm Bölsche, and Gertrud Prellwitz. Additional illustrations appeared on the cover of the social-democratic newspaper *Vorwärts* for the labor day celebration in May 1905 and on the cover *Körperkultur* magazine in 1909. By 1920, Fidus’s popularity had reached such a point that the widely read magazine *Die Schönheit* dedicated an entire special issue to his work.

As his later critics alleged, his work was indeed filled with derivative clichés and repetitive, uninventive motifs. His early popularity can be hard to comprehend when looking only at the art. Berlin author Dr. Hans Bethge (1876–1946) proffered one possibility for Fidus’s appeal in an essay that appeared in *Der Eigene* in 1899 and again in 1903. “His sensibility is entirely German and he has given poignant expression to the most German of feelings, nostalgia. It runs actually through his whole art like a delicate

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286 Hermand, *Der Schein des schönen Lebens*, 73.
287 Frecot, Geist, and Kerbs, *Fidus*, 105; *Körperkultur* 4, no. 6 (June 1909).
mood, which is indeed nothing but a special sense of yearning.” Fidus’s broad embrace of back-to-nature movements gave his images an innocence and a longing for a time of innocence and pre-industrial landscapes.

The first illustration Fidus did for Der Eigene was in 1898. It is a vignette accompanying an article in the first issue of Der Eigene’s second volume. The pen-and-ink composition used a wreath of thorns as a circular frame for a small sketch of a young boy’s head. In 1899 he also created an image of David performing before Saul for Kupfer’s anthology of homoerotic literature, although this image was never used at the time. [Figure 6].

Wild-haired youths were a regular part of his early work and this was especially true for the work that appeared in Der Eigene. Nearly androgynous and with few pronounced sexual characteristics, they were inevitably engaged in outdoor activities, flinging their arms open in sun-lit skies and traipsing about as water nymphs in lily-pad-filled lagoons. The prototypical youth from his artwork can be seen in Fidus’s design for a seal for the GdE [Figure 7].

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290 Hans Bethge, “Fidus,” Der Eigene: Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur, Kunst und Litteratur 4, no. 6 (June 1903): 422; an earlier version of the article appeared as “Fidus,” Der Eigene: Monatsschrift für Kunst und Leben 2, no. 2 (September 1898): 95–98.
293 Wilhelm Spohr, Fidus (Minden: Bruns, 1902).
Another illustration published in *Der Eigene* in the same period, “Lucifer,” is at first glance, a bit of a mystery. It appears to be a departure from Fidus’s typical subject matter. A tall, naked man with massive wings gazes downward while astride the earth. The piece is hand-dated by the artist as April 16, 1892. A similar piece, “*Der verlorene Sohn*” (The Prodigal Son), appeared a few pages earlier in the same issue. This time, a similar winged figure turned away from the viewer and into shadows.296

But within theosophy, Lucifer, as the fallen angel, is depicted as the “bringer of light” who will unify humanity with the divine.297 A letter to the editor in an 1893 issue of *Sphinx* offered additional clarification. There the author equated Lucifer with will and materialism, and God with the ideal and spiritual.298 The return of Lucifer to God was described as the ultimate unification of will with the ideal.

Another image first created by Fidus, *Lichtgebet* (Light prayer), became the icon of the youth movement and Lebensreform groups in general. Originally titled *Zu Gott* (To God), an early version was completed in 1892. The image featured one of Fidus’s typical wild-haired and naked blond youths standing atop a rocky cliff. With his back to the viewer he has thrown open his arms and looks heavenward to bask in the healing rays of sunlight. Until 1938, Fidus constantly reworked the image in a variety of mediums, from charcoal to oil paints. It was the official motif for *Fest der Jugend*, a meeting of the Wandervogel, scouts, and other independent youth groups on Hoher Meißner in October

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1913. Demonstrating a keen business sense, Fidus issued collectible postcards featuring the image that could be carried by enthusiastic youths in the same spirit as a religious icon, each inscribed with the date and location of the historic gathering. He also produced high-quality prints of the oil paintings. By one estimate, some version of the illustration could be found hanging in one out of every ten German homes during and after the war.

The image was never published in *Der Eigene*, but a similar motif of a young boy reaching out from a rocky outcropping, was published with the title *Ganymede* in 1903. In this version, the youth reached out not for the sun, but for Zeus in the form of an approaching eagle. The story of Ganymede’s abduction by Zeus was considered a foundational myth in ancient Greece for establishing the practice of pederasty. So its appearance in *Der Eigene* is not unsurprising.

Following the First World War, Fidus would continue to produce work incorporating themes drawn from a variety of religious and natural contexts. But like Brand, he would increasingly conceive of his work in national and racial terms. By 1922, the beloved *Lichtgebet* was referred to by Fidus as a symbol for “the bright future” of Germany.

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302 Frecot, Geist, and Kerbs, *Fidus*, 258–60.
The very fact that an artist as popular as Fidus was in the pages of Der Eigene, demonstrated that for all of the journal’s strident language about challenging middle-class expectations, the aesthetics of the publication were nearly indistinguishable from the material promoted by the more widely embraced Lebensreform groups promoting nudism, vegetarianism, and other natural solutions for health and wellness. Even the most abstruse painting from Kupffer, would still have stylistically been at home within the all-embracing aesthetics of those reform groups. His artwork rarely appeared in Der Eigene, but his conscious attempts to utilize clearly understood symbols meant that many were also set in light-filled, timeless landscapes and included ever-present lotus blossoms.303

Conventional aesthetics and tastes weren’t the only forces tethering Brand and the other members of the GdE to the present. As they strove to incorporate the divine and timeless into their visual material, they would increasingly be unable to escape the turbulent politics of the Weimar Republic. Their response to the challenges faced by a young and struggling representative democracy, and the aspirations of the GdE, would become increasingly radicalized in the coming years.

303 An exception is Élisàr von Kupffer, Der Engel der Lichtgeburt, Der Eigene: Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur 9, no. 10 (1921/22): 284.
4. “OVER THE CORPSES”:
THE SPECTACLE OF THE EULENBURG AFFAIR
AND THE COLLAPSE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

In June 1908, Adolf Brand was nearly halfway finished serving an eighteen-month sentence for criminal libel in Berlin’s Tegel prison. An uncharacteristically contrite Brand wrote an eight-page letter to Bernhard von Bülow, chancellor of Germany, begging for clemency. He promised to return to “the small, so cherished to me Wilhelmshagen . . . away from all politics and all fights, finally living silent and withdrawn with my parents and only my art.”304

Brand’s predicament was the direct result of his policy of “Weg über Leichen”—charting a path and political strategy that would stop at nothing (or in literal translation, “go over dead bodies”) on the way to achieving his goal: forcing the repeal of Paragraph 175 by publicly exposing the same-sex attractions and affairs of high-ranked government officials and prominent politicians. It is a great irony that Brand adopted this strategy from the much more restrained and better known medical author Alfred Moll, who first advocated for the practice in 1902:

Homosexuals are sometimes accused, also by well-meaning individuals, that they agitate too much. But what should they do? If they do not agitate, they can never reach their goal. They would seem then to have no other way: they must seek their goal like a kind of a ruthless military commander or politician trampling over a

mountain of corpses. They just need to name publicly the names of men whose homosexuality is notorious and easily proven. Then “many of the highest bureaucrats and some of the most influential politicians” would have to realize that not only what they think are “the most miserable vermin,” but also “my nephew, my son, and my friend move in same-sex circles.” Thereby, they would have to recognize the hypocrisy and futility of keeping Paragraph 175.305

By the fall of 1907, Brand was explicitly pointing to Moll’s suggestion as the inspiration for his political strategy to gain greater public acceptance of intimate male relationships.306 For Brand, the figurative corpses here would be the careers and reputations of the hypocrites, liars, and dissemblers who refused to publicly acknowledge their own same-sex attractions. The practice was a natural extension of Brand’s embrace of radical individualism. The blurred philosophy practiced by Brand and the GdE—combining Nietzsche’s Übermensch with Stirner’s privileged egoist—allowed one to feel part of an exceptional elite, not limited by ideology nor beholden to society’s expectations.307 This proved to be an explosive combination when paired with Brand’s intolerance of hypocrisy in any form and his unflinching insistence upon absolute honesty about one’s desires and erotic attractions.

306 Adolf Brand, “Ob des Reiches Fürst und gewaltiger Kanzler der Freundesliebe huldigt . . . ,” Die Tribüne: revolutionäre Wochenzeitung für Politik und Volksaufklärung 2 (October 9, 1907); excerpted in Richard Linsert, Kabale und Liebe: über Politik und Geschlechtsleben (Berlin: Man-Verlag, 1931), 466–68. Brand asserted that Moll’s recommendation was published in Die Zukunft on December 13, 1902; the correct date is September 6, as noted above.
Even without Brand’s decidedly enthusiastic participation, the combustible power of accusations of homosexuality was already apparent in the opening years of the twentieth century. Such accusations, direct or implied, could completely disrupt the German political sphere. This was, in part, thanks to a series of high-profile “outings” publicized in the national press from 1902 to 1906. As historian Isabel Hull noted, charges of homosexuality were so powerful in this period because homosexuals appeared to not only symbolically undermine the family, but also religion, and, by extension, the state:

Since the rise of the nation state, religion had come to be regarded as the repository of patriotic virtues. Far from being patriotic, homosexuals, it was thought, were loyal only to their kind. This meant that they formed a kind of International.308

It was in this context that charges of a camarilla of homosexuals out to thwart Germany’s imperial expansion ignited the Eulenburg Affair, the most notorious domestic scandal of Wilhelm II’s tenure as emperor. In a series of trials lasting from 1907 through late 1908, prominent members of the Kaiser’s personal entourage were embroiled in highly public accusations of homosexuality. The primary target for exposure was Philipp Prince zu Eulenburg (1847–1921), one of the closest advisors of Kaiser Wilhelm II during the 1890s.

It certainly did not help matters that Eulenburg had genuinely been part of an unofficial camarilla that conspired to bring about Bismarck’s fall from power. In his biography of Bismarck, Jonathan Steinberg has a vivid account of how Eulenburg deftly

utilized his favored position at the heart of the Kaiser’s entourage to orchestrate the palace intrigue, which led to Bismarck’s resignation. Furthermore, Eulenburg’s homosexual liaisons in Vienna and Munich had been largely an open secret for years. That fact alone attracted the attention of Brand and offered an entirely new arena for him to practice *Weg über Leichen*, and reach a potential audience that would easily outnumber any that he could ever dream of for *Der Eigene*. In this regard, Brand got his wish: his participation in the scandal garnered him a libel suit from the chancellor, and that trial provided the opportunity to share his views about male sexuality in a very public forum. Indeed, the trial drew front-page coverage from the forty Berlin newspapers—and it was often Brand’s views as much as his actions that constituted the story.

Due to the close proximity of the affair’s participants to the Kaiser—and the later implications for the development of foreign policy—the numerous court trials and main participants in the Eulenburg Affair already have been examined in great detail and with perceptive analysis. In addition, the wealth of political cartoons and satirical comedy

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inspired by the scandal have also been given close scrutiny.\textsuperscript{312} As a result, this chapter will provide only an overview of the scandal’s events. Instead, the analysis will focus primarily on the one trial involving Brand, with the goal of elucidating how the public notoriety surrounding it destroyed the causes of both Brand and Hirschfeld.

In the aftermath of Brand’s trial, the movement to repeal Paragraph 175 was riven. Its leaders were discredited and mocked by the educated middle class, who would be essential to supporting any elimination of the measure. For all of Hirschfeld’s buoyant optimism about the power of education to change public opinion, reaction to the trial underlined the vast distance between his hopeful projections for greater social and legal acceptance of homosexuality and the stark political reality.

**A Growing Legacy of Scandals**

Prior to the appearance of Moll’s essay in the influential weekly *Die Zukunft*, its crusading publisher, Maximilian Harden (1861–1927), had already used its pages to expose the homosexuality of a cousin of Wilhelm II. In 1901, Harden printed allegations that a male prostitute was extorting Friedrich Count von Hohenau.\textsuperscript{313} The revelation cost Hohenau both his job in the diplomatic service and his welcome at the imperial court. It also set a template and precedent for similar actions in the future by the press and


blackmailers alike. Hirschfeld later speculated in 1914 that almost 30 percent of Berlin’s homosexuals had been blackmailed at some point.\textsuperscript{314}

Harden was not acting in the spirit of Moll’s recommendation. Rather, he was more interested in the potency of the symbol of homosexuality to incite political action and expose hypocrisy. Nonetheless, he did not appear to harbor animosity toward homosexuals. He wrote several articles in his progressive newspaper promoting the abolition of Paragraph 175.\textsuperscript{315} In 1898, his publication was also the first to publish an article in support of Hirschfeld and the newly created WhK.\textsuperscript{316} But once the power of allegations began to be glimpsed, the destructive potential was immediately apparent to him and others.\textsuperscript{317}

In the fall of 1902, allegations of homosexuality began to appear in Italian newspapers about Friedrich Alfred Krupp, Germany’s leading industrialist and the richest person in the nation. On November 15, 1902 the Social Democratic newspaper \textit{Vorwärts} repeated the allegations, reveling in a series of alleged sexual improprieties by Krupp with boys at his villa in Capri.\textsuperscript{318} A week following the publication, Krupp’s sudden death at age forty-eight, in a presumed suicide, was cause for alarm. Publications as varied as \textit{Die Zukunft} to the liberal daily \textit{Berliner Tageblatt} and the \textit{Hamburger Fremdenblatt},

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{314} Hirschfeld, \textit{Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes}, 897.
\bibitem{316} Albert Eulenburg, “Paragraph 175,” \textit{Die Zukunft} 23 (April 30, 1898): 185–90.
\bibitem{318} “Krupp auf Capri,” \textit{Vorwärts}, November 15, 1902; see also the discussion by a Berlin police commissioner in Tresckow, \textit{Von Fürsten}, 117–19.
\end{thebibliography}
Germany’s leading business and commerce newspaper, called for the elimination of Paragraph 175. Furthermore, they all decried the practice of exposing private lives to achieve political ends.\footnote{Excerpts from press coverage are provided in Magnus Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht 1902/3,” Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität 5, no. 2 (1903): 1317–19.} In this case, Krupp was pursued in order to attack, however indirectly, German expansionism as well as his family’s firm.

While the denunciations of Vorwärts were swift and widespread, including the Kaiser making unexpectedly emotional remarks at Krupp’s graveside during the funeral, the disruptive potential of “outing” prominent figures was confirmed.\footnote{Kaiser Wilhelm II, speech in Essen on November 26, 1902, reproduced in Wilhelm II, Die politischen Reden Kaiser Wilhelms II.: Eine Auswahl, ed. Michael A. Obst, Otto-von-Bismarck-Stiftung, Wissenschaftliche Reihe 15 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011), 250–2; For the political uproar caused by the speech, see John C. G. Röhl, Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss of War and Exile, 1900–1941, trans. Sheila De Bellaigue and Roy Bridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 139–143.} It was also a strategy that Hirschfeld took great pains from which to distance himself and the WhK’s political advocacy work. In the aftermath of Krupp’s death, Hirschfeld declared, “under no circumstances” would a practice of publicly naming prominent homosexuals be followed by his committee, when “scientific research and explanation could also lead to the same goal.”\footnote{Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht 1902/3,” 1320.} This pledge, and the explicit denunciation of Weg über Leichen, were later repeated by Hirschfeld almost five years later in the charged atmosphere of the Eulenburg allegations.\footnote{Magnus Hirschfeld, “Einleitung und Situations-Bericht,” Vierteljahrsberichte des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees (Fortsetzung der Monatsberichte und des Jahrbuches für sexuelle Zwischenstufen, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität) 1, no. 1 (October 1909): 11.} But by then, allegations and revelations of homosexuality in the upper echelons of both the military and the Prussian aristocracy were an established part
of the national press scene.\textsuperscript{323} As a result, Hirschfeld’s own protestations, no matter how sincere, rang hollow.

Adding to the charged atmosphere, in the period from 1903 to 1906, a cavalcade of lesser scandals roiled the aristocracy and military. In those years, twenty officers were convicted by courts-martial of homosexual conduct. The most prominent were members of the elite Garde du Corps in Potsdam, from which Major Johannes Count von Lynar was charged with molesting his aide-de-camp. Lieutenant General Wilhelm Count von Hohenau, commander of the regiment and a blood relation of the Kaiser, was also convicted. An additional six officers, whose lives were ruined by blackmail, committed suicide in 1906–7.\textsuperscript{324} Finally, in the midst of this turmoil, Friedrich Heinrich, Prince of Prussia, declined ordination as the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of St. John, explaining that his homosexual attractions made him unsuited for the honor.\textsuperscript{325}

During the period before the Eulenburg Affair began, Adolf Brand had also tried his hand at exposing the private affairs of a public figure. In 1904, he unsuccessfully targeted Friedrich Dasbach (1846–1907), a Reichstag delegate and member of the Catholic Center party. In a short article, Brand accused the chaplain of using his social outreach efforts with Berlin’s numerous young male prostitutes as cover to satisfy his


\textsuperscript{324} Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal,” 239.

\textsuperscript{325} Magnus Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht [1908],” \textit{Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Homosexualität} 9 (1908): 646; Court reaction around the Kaiser is detailed in Röhl, \textit{Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss}, 541–43.
own desires. Dasbach sued for libel, but the case ended in an out-of-court settlement. It also garnered a short mention in Vorwärts, which noted that Brand was unable to assemble “a number of young people” to testify as witnesses. But Brand’s moment of greatest notoriety occurred when he chose to insert himself in Harden’s campaign to expose homosexuals at the heart of the Kaiser’s inner circle.

The Liebenberg Round Table

In late 1906, Harden began an aggressive campaign by using the ever combative and critical tone of his newsweekly to force the retirement of Philipp Eulenburg from service to the Kaiser. The events of the preceding years had a cumulative effect, convincing Harden that the spread of homosexuality in Prussian society had increased dramatically and that the Kaiser’s foreign policy was dangerously in thrall to Eulenburg.

Harden had initially welcomed Wilhelm II’s muscular strategy of confrontational Weltpolitik, with its impressive naval fleet and aggressive overseas expansion. But with the passage of time, Harden was disappointed by the results of Wilhelm’s strategy of “personal rule” and its erratic foreign policy—a consequence, he believed, of the influence of anti-imperialist policy advice from Eulenburg and members of the


diplomatic corps. Harden felt confirmed in his beliefs because no less than Bismarck had once quipped to him in 1892 that “There are supposed to have been some quite good generals among the *cinaedi* [a pejorative Greek term for homosexuals], but I have yet to encounter any good diplomats of the sort.”329 By distancing Wilhelm from his closest advisors, Harden intended to push the Kaiser into a more aggressive stance with the French.

The intense friendship between the Kaiser and Eulenburg began in 1886, when the twenty-seven-year-old Prince Wilhelm, still two years from being crowned emperor, met Eulenburg on a hunting trip. Almost immediately, Eulenburg effectively “fell in love” with the Kaiser, expressing his affections in florid letters with near continual flattery in the period from 1886 to 1897.330 Eulenburg was an enthusiastic champion of the Kaiser’s supposed talents and decision-making prowess, a tendency that only increased as Eulenburg became the instigator of Wilhelm’s strategy of personal rule after he became emperor.

Eulenburg came from one of the most distinguished families in service to the throne—his uncle was Bismarck’s longtime Interior Minister of Prussia; his cousin Botho later served in the same position and was appointed Minister-President of Prussia when the position was briefly and unsuccessfully separated from the chancellorship from 1892–4; and his cousin August served as Household Minister to Wilhelm II. After a brief and

unremarkable military career, Philipp Eulenburg had begrudgingly entered into diplomatic service under pressure from his father, but otherwise considered himself an artist. He did indeed evidence some talent for fiction writing as well as romantic lyrical poetry and ballads; his popular *Rosenlieder* entered into their 300th printing in 1910.\(^{331}\) He surrounded himself with other aristocrats with artistic pretensions in what the press later termed the “Liebenberg Round Table,” deriving its name from Eulenburg’s estate in Brandenburg.

In addition to Eulenburg, there were five other key members of the Liebenberg Round Table: General Kuno Count von Moltke (1847–1921), military commander of Berlin and General Adjutant of the Kaiser; Axel Freiherr von Varnbüler (1851–1937), diplomatic representative of Württemberg to Prussia from 1894–1918; Eberhard Count zu Dohna-Schlobitten (1846–1905), Eulenburg’s childhood friend and the person who introduced him to the future Kaiser; Georg von Hülsen (1858–1922), Intendant of the Berlin Court Theater from 1903–18; and Emil Count von Schlitz gennant von Görtz (1851–1914), sculptor and President of the first chamber of the Grand Duchy of Hesse from 1900–18.

Eulenburg, Varnbüler, and Kuno Moltke formed the intimate core of the group. They, like many of the members and associates of the Liebenberg circle, were all married. Eulenburg had married in 1875 and was an especially devoted father of eight children. But the triumvirate at the heart of the group imbued the conversation among and between the circle of friends with a distinctly homoerotic tone. Many of the letters

\(^{331}\) Hull, *Entourage of Wilhelm II*, 58.
exchanged between group members were deliberately destroyed, but those that survive
brazenly referred to the Kaiser as “Liebchen,” or to one or another of the correspondents
as “she” or “her,” and frequently referred to Eulenburg with a feminized version of his
first name, “Philine.”  

For example, Varnbüler wrote to Kuno Moltke on June 4, 1898 that he had
encountered the Kaiser in Berlin’s largest park. “Liebchen stopped me in the Tiergarten
and, after he had suitably admired my yellow boots and the matching color tones of my
riding habit, he asked me: ‘What do you know about Kuno? I cannot get anything out of
him nor Phili.’” During the exchange, the Kaiser offered “a few strong expressions not to
be repeated here,” which demonstrated to Varnbüler “that he is completely informed and
has no illusions any longer.”

In addition, they characterized the intensity of the friendships within the circle in
the most exalted of language. Their devoted friendships were expressions of
“individuality,” “pure heights,” and escapes from the “oppressive atmosphere of the
normal”—language, which in its praise for elite cultural sensitivities would have easily
resonated with the contributors and readers of Der Eigene. In addition to its artistic
proclivities, the three core members of the group were also avid spiritualists and

332 See ibid., 55–57, for examples of the homoerotic tone of the surviving letters of the group; for
a discussion of the extent of the destruction and remaining letters, see John C. G. Röhl, “Fürst
Philipp zu Eulenburg. Zu einem Lebensbild,” in Männerliebe im alten Deutschland.
Sozialgeschichtliche Abhandlungen, ed. Rüdiger Lautmann and Angela Taeger,
Sozialwissenschaftliche Studien zur Homosexualität 5 (Berlin: Verlag rosa Winkel, 1992), 121–
22; this essay is a reproduction of the introduction to Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Eulenburgs
Korrespondenz, 1:9–53.
333 Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Eulenburgs Korrespondenz, 1:45, as quoted in Steinberg, Bismarck, 426.
practitioners of clairvoyance. These were fashionable practices for the time, but Eulenburg was particularly fervent in his beliefs and this would also become the subject of Harden’s ridicule once the scandal emerged.

The Kaiser’s affections for Eulenburg were well known. Already in 1888, Herbert von Bismarck heard from others at court that Eulenburg was “more loved than any other living person” by Wilhelm. He was far less a reader or writer than the members of the Liebenberg circle and he wrote few letters to Eulenburg. Of greater importance for the Kaiser, were his demonstrations of friendship. He protectively guarded his private time, and instead extended invitations to a select few, mostly members of the Liebenberg circle, to join him on hunting excursions and other pleasure trips. As the friendship between the Kaiser and Eulenburg flourished in the 1890s, Wilhelm displayed his affection by frequenting the Liebenberg estate, not least for the yearly hunting trips that took place in October or November until the scandal broke out in 1906.

Despite the suspicions of Harden and others, there is no evidence that the intense relationship between Wilhelm and Eulenburg ever had a physical expression. Wilhelm possessed a truly limited capacity for self-awareness. He seemed to recognize the homoerotic nature of the friendships within his entourage, but was unable to articulate

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why he enjoyed surrounding himself with an all-male circle of aesthetes. There is no doubt that Eulenburg and the other members of the entourage provided Wilhelm with witty, erudite conversation and entertainment—a distinctly different set of social and artistic talents than the military officers and courtiers who normally surrounded him. Equally important, Eulenburg and the others never challenged or questioned the Kaiser’s worst personality traits. They were generally pliant, yet deft managers of his outbursts—ever accommodating and solicitous while providing him with a unique social outlet.

In the 1890s, Eulenburg became an unexpected and unlikely power broker, able to affect policy by influencing the Kaiser’s appointments. In the political realm, Eulenburg championed a conservative, agrarian-centric vision for Germany that preserved the political power and influence of the Prussian Junker elite with their vast landholdings. Eulenburg’s resistance to any potential dilution of Junker power resulted in a pronounced skepticism about the prudence of continuing to expand the empire. As such, Eulenburg advocated for a more accommodationist stance with France. He reached the height of his influence in 1897. In that year, the Kaiser installed Eulenburg’s longtime protégé from the diplomatic corps, Bernhard von Bülow, as foreign secretary. The move was made in an anticipation of Bülow’s eventual elevation to chancellor, which he was appointed in 1900.

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Bülow was not a part of the Liebenberg Round Table, but his friendship with Eulenburg was well established and intimate, dating from their student days in Strasbourg. Bülow was also a master of the Liebenberg style: unflagging flattery and knowing coded language celebrating the “unique” and “individual.” Indeed John Röhl, in one part of his definitive, multi-volume biography of Wilhelm II, has declared that Bülow “took sycophancy to the level of the black arts.” Following Bülow’s appointment as foreign secretary, the limits of the Kaiser’s friendship with Eulenburg and his willed obliviousness to the homoeroticism within the Liebenberg circle were first laid bare.

In October 1897, Eulenburg’s younger brother Friedrich, a staff officer in the prestigious Corps de Garde, was called before a court-martial and accused of “unnatural passions.” The evidence must have been fairly damning because Friedrich did not attempt to protest and resigned before a decision was delivered. Wilhelm reacted with shock and insisted that Eulenburg cut off all contact with his brother—a request that despite Eulenburg’s unabashed love for the Kaiser, he could not and would not abide. It marked the beginning of a pronounced cooling in the relationship between the two. In

340 Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Eulenburgs Korrespondenz, 1:26–28. Examples also include Bülow to Eulenburg, March 2, 1890, ibid., 1, no. 331; Bülow to Eulenburg, March 13, 1893, ibid., 2, nos. 776, 785, and 1050; See also Johannes Haller, “Bülow und Eulenburg,” in Front Wider Bülow: Staatsmänner, Diplomaten und Forscher zu seinen Denkwürdigkeiten, ed. Friedrich Thimme (Munich, 1931), 43–47; Winzen, Bernhard Fürst von Bülow, 63–65.
341 Röhl, Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss, 110.
fact, with Bülow successfully placed in power and Eulenburg’s health faltering, he considered retiring to Liebenberg.

Harden had already begun attacking Eulenburg as early as 1893 and continued intermittently for almost a decade until threatening him with exposure of his homosexual liaisons. Under pressure from Harden and blackmailers alike, Eulenburg chose in 1902 to retire from his position as ambassador in Vienna and remove himself from the Kaiser’s entourage. But by 1905, he re-emerged from a brief exile in Switzerland, seemingly reinvigorated and again close to the Kaiser. His reappearance in Berlin stirred great fear among the emperor’s courtiers and convinced Bülow that Eulenburg was preparing a political comeback.\(^{344}\) It was also unfortunate timing that coincided with Germany yielding hegemony over Morocco to France at the Algeciras Conference in the spring of 1906—actions presumed by Harden to be the result of Eulenburg’s influence.

As a result, Harden slowly escalated his threats in his published attacks on Eulenburg. He began first by linking Moltke and Eulenburg in two articles published in November 1906. In one, he named the members of Liebenberg Round Table. Declaring them, “All good people. Musical, poetic, spiritualistic, so pious that through prayer they expect more healing effects than from the most educated doctors.” But Harden explained, because they were so close to the Kaiser, they had forfeited their expectations of privacy. He darkly intoned that “the filaments of the web that they have spun, complicate the breathing of the German Empire.” Harden also tauntingly referred to Eulenburg as

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\(^{344}\) Röhl assesses the credibility of these rumors and concludes that while exaggerated, they are not unfounded. See Röhl, *Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss*, 548–51.
“Phili” and described him as an “unhealthy, late-romantic clairvoyant.” He ended the first article with a warning, “The cataclysmic effects of this man should, at the minimum, not continue in the dark.”

The second article, published a week later, included a dramatic dialogue modeled on a scene from Goethe’s *Faust*. Two characters—“The Harpist” (an allusion to Eulenburg’s popular lyrical poetry) and “Sweetie” (a reference to Moltke and his supposed love of chocolates; the term, *Süße*, was also slang for a homosexual)—fret that Harden has copies of personal letters they exchanged. Sweetie worries that some may contain embarrassing references to *Liebchen* (the Kaiser).

Neither Bülow nor members of the royal family informed the Kaiser of the growing rumors swirling around Eulenburg. But while the Kaiser was kept unaware, his family certainly knew. The Kaiser’s eldest sister Charlotte, Hereditary Princess of Saxe-Meiningen, noted with delighted approval, “Harden’s revelations were masterly but he must produce more, although what he discloses can only be distressing: our misery is . . . frightening.” She noted that the rest of the family condemned Harden as a “vile scoundrel, insolent Jew, brute, etc.” and at court “blindness, mawkish sentiment, apathy, stupidity, false sympathy with H.M.” were the prevailing responses.

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348 Charlotte Hereditary Princess of Saxe-Meiningen to Schweninger, 10 and 18 November 1907, as quoted in ibid., 556.
Then, as Eulenburg prepared to receive the highest Prussian decoration, the Order of the Black Eagle, Harden abandoned all pretense of coded language and denounced Eulenburg in an article published on April 27, 1907. He noted that Eulenburg’s “vita sexualis was no healthier” than Friedrich Heinrich and Eulenburg should follow the prince into exile.349

On May 2, the twenty-five-year-old Crown Prince, also an officer in the Garde du Corps, informed his father of the mounting scandal and presented him with copies of Harden’s articles.350 The Kaiser promptly notified the head of his military cabinet and the interior minister that Hohenau, Lynar, and Moltke were to resign their commissions. The Kaiser also made it known that Moltke and Eulenburg were to take measures to declare their innocence of the charges.351 After Eulenburg resigned his post as ambassador in Vienna in June, Harden rejoiced at the news and declared victory, calling himself the “Liberator of the Vaterland.”352

In response, Moltke at first considered challenging Harden to a duel and then attempted to pursue a criminal libel case against Harden. But the state prosecutor rebuffed him and Moltke settled for a civil libel case instead.353 This time, despite her

353 Hull, Entourage of Wilhelm II, 137.
dislike for Eulenburg, the Kaiser’s sister was horrified. “Have these people gone mad? Do they really want to dispute this? The whole world knows about it.”

The trial, lasting from October 23–29, opened with damning testimony provided by Moltke’s former wife, Lily von Elbe. In the following days, a press frenzy ensued as the daily papers breathlessly narrated the testimony. Hirschfeld took a star turn as an expert witness on homosexuality, testifying that while Moltke may not recognize himself as homosexual, based on his ex-wife’s testimony, he had “an unconscious orientation” that could “objectively” be labeled homosexual, even if he had never committed sodomy. Based on the strength of this testimony, the judge found compelling evidence of Moltke’s homosexuality. He lost the case and Harden was acquitted. The decision met with public approval, but evidently not from the Kaiser. Presumably as the result of imperial pressure, the verdict was quickly overturned on a technicality. The state prosecutor also reconsidered his earlier decision and announced his intention to pursue a criminal libel case.

Intrigued by the mounting scandal, Brand had already inserted himself directly into the fray by releasing a pamphlet in the name of the GdE on September 10, 1907. In it, he followed up on accusations made known to him by journalist Joachim Gehlsen (1841–1908) of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Deutsche Reichsglocke*. Brand accused

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355 For a detailed account, see ibid., 566–68.
Chancellor Bülow of kissing and embracing his privy councilor, Max Scheefer, at gatherings hosted by Eulenburg.\textsuperscript{357} Brand gleefully referred to Scheefer as Bülow’s “inseparable companion” and “better half.”\textsuperscript{358} He also punningly accused the chancellor of enjoying “Scheefer-Stünden”—a play on the similar-sounding Schäferstündchen, a poetic word for a lovers’ tryst.\textsuperscript{359} Bülow’s biographer Peter Winzen has established that Bülow had numerous homosexual encounters while he was ambassador in Rome in the 1890s. During that period, Scheefer and Bülow began a homosexual relationship in mid-1895 and the affair persisted when both subsequently moved to Berlin.\textsuperscript{360} Nonetheless, in order to publicly clear his name and curry the favor of the Kaiser, Bülow pursued a criminal libel charge against Brand.\textsuperscript{361}

The trial against Brand was held in the second criminal division of Berlin’s district court a few days following the close of Moltke’s first trial against Harden. Even though the trial lasted only one day, November 6, 1907, it provided the Berlin daily press with plenty of fodder for its signature sarcastic wit and biting political commentary. More


\textsuperscript{358} Hecht, “Die Harden-Prozesse,” 251–53.

\textsuperscript{359} The usage of Schäferstunde as a demure expression for extramarital sex can be traced to the eighteenth-century and the period’s enduring passion for pastoral literature. See Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, \textit{Deutsches Wörterbuch}, vol. 14 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854), col. 2011–12.

\textsuperscript{360} Winzen, \textit{Bernhard Fürst von Bülow}, 11–13, 46.

\textsuperscript{361} Bericht in der Pressestrafsache, Der Erste Staatsanwalt bei dem königlichen Landgericht II, October 14, 1907, I. HA Rep. 84a, no. 58203: 51–56, GStA-PK.
importantly, the spectacle of the chancellor entering a courtroom to testify about his sexual interests captured the rapt attention of the public.

Berlin’s newspaper of record, the *Vossische Zeitung*, reported a packed courtroom eagerly anticipating the arrival of the then thirty-three-year-old Brand. It was not a sympathetic portrayal:

Good Lord, [he is] a pale, narrow, slender lad with a hairstyle like Ludwig II of Bavaria. One might mistake him a busker [*Kurrendsänger*], if not for the restless flickering and hate-filled eyes, which betrayed a particular fervor. Anarchist, atheist, then theist and monarchist, socialist, but always a homosexualist, artist and aesthete; this is Mr. Adolf Brand. Though he has often sat in the dock, this time there appears to be no courage beating in his chest.\(^{362}\)

The liberal, progressive *Berliner Morgenpost*, Germany’s largest circulating newspaper, also took special note of Brand’s resemblance to Ludwig II, but was somewhat more sympathetic. The paper noted that he didn’t appear to be a bad person, “but he possessed a childish recklessness and gullibility, like so many homosexuals demonstrate.”\(^{363}\) According to the *Morgenpost*, Brand’s only mistake had been the unquestioning credulity with which he greeted the gossip of anonymous schemers. In the paper’s estimation, most of the assembled spectators wanted to catch sight of Eulenburg. Of considerably less interest was the testimony of Brand or Bülow, whose alleged homosexuality was generally dismissed as a “laughable” notion.

Once the trial commenced, Brand, true to form, did not hesitate to share his understanding of homosexuality or the philosophical explanations for his views. As the *Vossische Zeitung* summarized in weary tones:

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\(^{363}\) “Der Prozeß Bülow-Brand,” *Berliner Morgenpost*, November 7, 1907.
The witnesses, without distinction of rank, must patiently wait outside [the courtroom]. Perhaps all the more patient in the antechamber than elsewhere, because Mr. Adolf Brand spoke first about “evolution” and “right of personality” and “individual anarchism.” “Plato says,” began the “Agent of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen” and the worthy representatives of justice . . . struggled to retain control over their laughter.\cite{364}

To Brand’s credit, the papers covering the trial all devoted some space to explaining his understanding of homosexuality. The otherwise liberal Berliner Tageblatt generally took the most critical and disapproving tone of the papers in its reporting of the trial. But even it was still careful to note, “He means by homosexuality not homosexual acts, but rather the larger, ideal, spiritual affection between friends.”\cite{365} And the Vossische Zeitung quoted Brand explaining that homosexuality was an “outrageously misused word” that meant “the spiritual affection between friends, which, of course, is also erotically tinged.”\cite{366}

In his testimony, Brand claimed that he had acted because Bülow was the unacknowledged source of the rumors about Eulenburg. Furthermore, he charged that Bülow had orchestrated the entire scandal to prevent Eulenburg from potentially maneuvering the Kaiser into replacing him as chancellor. Brand summarized his actions by saying that he had only implicated Bülow, because the chancellor, “as a homosexual, had used homosexuality for political purposes.”\cite{367}

Bülow testified briefly, denying any knowledge of the accusations lobbed at him by Brand. He explained that the nature of his job required that he spend a significant

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{364} “Prozeß Bülow-Brand.”
\footnote{365} “Der Prozess des Fürsten Bülow,” Berliner Tageblatt, November 6, 1907, evening edition.
\footnote{366} “Prozeß Bülow-Brand.”
\footnote{367} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
amount of time with Scheefer and have him readily available to assist with affairs of state, which included having a room near his in the chancellor’s residence. Bülow also disavowed knowing anything about Eulenburg’s sexual interests, but he turned on his mentor and coyly noted that in the last few years he was aware of “unfavorable rumors” about Eulenburg.368

A weakened Eulenburg had arrived to the courtroom on crutches, accompanied by his personal physician and with an aide on either side to support him. He testified in carefully parsed words that his relations with men had “never violated Paragraph 175.”369 By restricting his testimony to the accepted narrow legal definition, he referred only to acts of sodomy.370 In the court transcript, Eulenburg complained:

As a result of all of the subtle nuances that [Hirschfeld] devised in order to support his system, no one feels certain as to whether they will be viewed as homosexual. In my youth, I was an enthusiastic friend. I am proud that I had good friends. But if I had known that after twenty-five, thirty years, a man would appear and develop a system where every friendship contains filth, then truthfully I would have not sought friends. The best that we Germans have is friendship and loyal friendships have always been highly regarded.371

The *Vossische Zeitung* could not resist referring to Eulenburg by the knowing nickname “The Harpist” in its account of the proceedings. Nonetheless, it and the other daily papers were eager to believe his testimony. The left-liberal *Morgenpost* had some fun at Eulenburg’s expense by rendering the phrase “every friendship contains filth” in

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368 Bülow’s testimony is quoted in Hecht, “Die Harden-Prozesse,” 259.
369 Ibid., 261.
370 On the evolution of German jurisprudence and interpretation of Paragraph 175, see Beachy, “The German Invention of Homosexuality,” 808–10.
371 Excerpted in “Der Prozeß Bülow-Brand.”
Those merely skimming the article would therefore have a distinctly misleading impression of Eulenburg’s statement.

Hirschfeld also testified, stating that he had never passed information about the alleged sexual interests of Bülow to Gehlsen or any other reporter. Unlike his earlier appearance in the Moltke trial, he refused to speculate on Bülow’s sexual attractions—an action that Brand took as a personal betrayal. At the trial’s conclusion, even Brand’s defense lawyer had difficulty mustering any support for his client. During the sentencing portion, his statement ostensibly in defense of Brand was damming. It also seemed to capture public sentiment:

“The accused is a man who, as a dreamer and devotee of his beliefs, felt an irresistible urge to demonstrate what was consistent with his convictions of the truth because he believed it would lead to the repeal of Paragraph 175. The purest sentiments of friendship and loyalty that have graced the German people, are now being declared by the representatives of this movement as activities of the homosexual disposition. This is a curse of our time, which weighs upon our nation and the accused is in the middle of this movement.”

This weak defense, that Brand was a man compelled to act due to the strength of his convictions, received absolutely no sympathy from the judge.

Brand received the maximum sentence, one year and six months in prison, and was immediately taken into custody because he was perceived as a flight risk. He reportedly appeared “baffled” by the severity of the verdict, but, according to one

\[372 \text{ Ibid.}\]
reporter, would not have sought a reduction “because he is without doubt an idealist, who
if not seeking martyrdom, nonetheless holds it in the highest esteem.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Brand’s later appeal to Bülow for a reduced sentence, quoted at the beginning of
this chapter, never received a response. Poor health ultimately allowed Brand an early
release on November 13, 1908, after he had served a year in prison.\footnote{Adolf Brand, “Mutterlieder,” \textit{Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit} 7, no. 3 (December 6, 1919): 7.} In February 1909,
he was ordered to report to Tegel and complete the final six months of his sentence.\footnote{Adolf Brand (writing as Franz Schwarzer), \textit{Interessante Briefe und Dokumente zur Bülow-Eulenburg-Intrige. Eine Aufklärungs- und Abwehrschrift gegen die Skandale und ihre Hintermänner. Mit Mitteilungen aus den Meineids-Akten und fünf facsimilierten Beweisstücken} (Berlin-Wilhelmshagen: Adolf Brand/Der Eigene, 1909), 14.} Instead, he took up exile in Switzerland. At the end of the month, Brand sent a postcard
postmarked from the Basel train station to the state prosecutor in Berlin saying that he
would remain in Switzerland until copies of letters from Hirschfeld to Gehlsen, which he
provided the court, had been “expertly reviewed.”\footnote{Memorandum, “Pressestrafsache, Nr. 1b J 1026.07,” February 25, 1909, I. HA Rep. 84a, no. 58203: 161–62, GStA-PK.}

While there, Brand also released a slim pamphlet of “interesting documents”
related to the Bülow trial. It was published under the pseudonym “Franz Schwarzer”—a
name which Hirschfeld felt was chosen to indicate his intentions to asperse
\textit{[anzuschwärzen]} him and the WhK’s theories of sexuality.\footnote{Hirschfeld, “Einleitung und Situations-Bericht [1909],” 9–10.} In the pamphlet, Brand
made unspecified accusations that Hirschfeld had perjured himself on the stand during
the Bülow trial.
Brand returned to Germany sometime before April 1910 and reported to Tegel in June to complete the final six months of his sentence; he was released on November 29, 1910. Later in life, Brand never wavered in his conviction that Bülow had instigated the Eulenburg Affair. Lately historians have tended to agree with this analysis. But when the former chancellor’s memoir was published in 1930, Brand was in the lonely minority. He nonetheless continued to excoriate Bülow for this and his hypocritical denial of his same-sex attractions. He claimed that in the final years of his life, Bülow had a sexual affair with a male pianist in Rome.

A Reactionary Court of Public Opinion

If the judiciary had acted with speed and severity in the Brand trial, the court of public opinion rendered its own verdict with equal dispatch—and with equally merciless judgment. The major newspapers across the political spectrum expressed a sense of exhaustion with the entire scandal. Liberal and conservative papers alike were aghast that it had been relatively simple to drag the upper echelon of the Reich’s elite and powerful into both the courtroom and a press frenzy.

378 Adolf Brand to Fidus, April 2, 1910, copy in Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen/Adolf Brand, Nr. 2 Korrespondenz, Schwules Museum Berlin (hereafter cited as SM); see also discussion in Keilson-Lauritz, Geschichtler Geschichte, 110.
379 The best analysis appears in Peter Winzen, Im Schatten Wilhelms II.: Bülows und Eulenburgs Poker um die Macht im Kaiserreich (Cologne: SH-Verlag, 2011); Das Ende der Kaiserherrlichkeit: die Skandalprozesse um die homosexuellen Berater Wilhelms II. 1907–1909 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010).
381 Claudia Bruns argues that the affair demonstrated how a political problem (i.e. the Kaiser’s increasingly unstable rule through personal monarchy) was transmuted in the popular imagination into a crisis expressed in sexual-pathological terms. See Claudia Bruns, “Skandale im Beraterkreis um Kaiser Wilhelm II.: Die homoerotische ‘Verbündelung’ der ‘Liebenberger Tafelrunde’ als Politikum,” in Homosexualität und Staatsräson: Männlichkeit, Homophobie und Politik in Deutschland 1900-1945, ed. Susanne zur Nieden, Geschichte und Geschlechter 46 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005), 71–73.
This fear of the exploitation of private lives for political gain primarily took the form of strong defenses of privacy. When the Brand trial ended, the *Berliner Tageblatt* concluded with relief that:

These days a strong wind blows against unscrupulous muckrakers. One can only hope that this wind will free us from all these toxic, pestilential miasmas. . . . It is absolutely necessary to establish again the principle that private lives, even those of opponents, must be spared from polemics. Whoever disregards this principle without the most urgent of reasons, does not belong to the ranks of gentlemen. And whoever attacks with slander or provokes with lies, belongs in prison.382

Public exasperation with Brand’s tactics was also captured in political cartoons. A fine example was published in later October 1907 in the popular satirical Berlin weekly *Kladderadatsch*. The magazine was generally conservative in tone; but when it came to choosing topics for humor, it maintained an abiding mistrust of the Kaiser’s competency. With a circulation between 40,000 and 50,000 at the turn of the century, the magazine captured public mood in the lead-up to the Brand trial in a cartoon “On the mobbing of Bülow.” The chancellor is depicted on a city street bending down to examine his pants leg marked by a urine stain. Bülow remarks to a nearby dog, “You would never have been so low-down *[hundsgemein]!!*” while a cloaked figure labeled as Brand, hurries away from the chancellor and up the sidewalk.383

The *Vossische Zeitung* had opened its summary of Brand’s trial by declaring, “It is a shame for the German people that the principal officials of the Reich and state must

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appear in court, for the sake of a perverted fellow like this ‘aesthete.’” By extension, the Kaiser, as well as the honor of the military, and the very nation itself, were at risk of being held hostage in similar acts in the future. This fact was not lost on Hirschfeld, who in later reviewing the events of the trials noted, “nothing annoyed so many people as the circumstance that, in connection with [the trials], a slur was cast on the honor of our army and the discipline on which its greatness and reputation is based.”

Much more savvy than Brand or Hirschfeld on these matters, Harden was aware of the mounting disapproval. Before the trials commenced, Harden published a defense of his actions where he insisted that he recognized the importance of privacy. “My goal is not to seek out crimes and offenses. Scandal seeks to spread fodder: a repellant trade. Sexual acts are the most private of affairs. Only when it is of national or social legal interest, may a stranger reveal them.” He continued that sexual interests do not define a person and whoever brings to light sexual activity without cause should be rightfully regarded as “a bastard or a snitch.”

A day after Brand’s sentencing, Hirschfeld tried a different approach to explain his participation in the trial. He published an article titled “Who Is to Blame?” First, he attempted to correct the misperception that homosexuality was more widespread than in the past. He also disputed the popular notion that it was more prevalent in the aristocracy.

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386 Harden, “Die Freunde,” 418; Harden is characterized as acting with “pure political motives” and not hatred of homosexuals in Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht [1908],” 644.
than among other classes. As the result of the sensational press coverage surrounding the Eulenburg Affair, he observed that public animosity had been unfairly focused at both the upper classes and the primary Jewish participants, himself and Harden.\textsuperscript{387}

Hirschfield may not have been aware, at least at first, how completely, and how disastrously, that animosity would rebound onto the WhK—and onto him personally. But it did so rebound, and with a painful vengeance.\textsuperscript{388} Some slights were larger than others. The influential, Munich-based weekly art magazine \textit{Jugend} printed a satirical cartoon titled, “Panic in Weimar” in which Hirschfeld is seen in profile strolling behind the city’s iconic monument to Goethe and Schiller. The double statue depicts the two authors side by side, with Goethe’s hand resting on Schiller’s shoulder. But in the cartoon version, Schiller spies Hirschfeld—rendered in the stereotypical depiction of Jewishness with a prominent, hooked nose—and cries in alarm, “Wolfgang, we can’t hold hands. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld is coming!”\textsuperscript{389} But the attacks turned increasingly personal. Hirschfeld reported in December 1907, that anti-Semitic leaflets had been distributed in front of his house with headings like, “Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, a danger to the public—the Jews are our misfortune.”\textsuperscript{390}

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\textsuperscript{388} Hirschfeld, \textit{Sexualpsychologie und Volkspsychologie. Eine epikritische Studie zum Harden-Prozess}, 18.
\textsuperscript{390} Magnus Hirschfeld, “Zur Klärung,” \textit{Monatsberichte des Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees} 6, no. 12 (December 1, 1907): 229.
During the trials, Hirschfeld had strained to distance himself from Brand, releasing a strongly worded denunciation of Brand’s tactics to Berlin’s daily newspapers and reasserting that “scientific exploration of the homosexual question” was the only proper course of action.\textsuperscript{391} Despite all of Hirschfeld’s strenuous clarifications, in the eyes of the bourgeois press, his actions and activities were no less scurrilous than those of Brand and Harden.\textsuperscript{392}

Hirschfeld’s earlier writings did not help matters. In a 1903 article where Hirschfeld summarized the events of the Krupp affair, he offered a slightly ominous sounding bit of advice. He counseled that it would be of “great service” if someone took the time during a \textit{Nordlandreise} — the Kaiser’s annual month-long, all-male pleasure cruise along the coasts of Norway — and explained to Wilhelm about “the nature and extent of homosexuality” and thereby prevented any new shocks to the throne.\textsuperscript{393}

The mere mention of the exclusive \textit{Nordlandreise} was a sign that the message had obviously been directed at Eulenburg and the very few members of the Kaiser’s entourage. Its subtext was also hard to miss: Hirschfeld and perhaps many others in politics and the press were aware of rumors about the homoerotic nature of the entourage and eliminating Paragraph 175 could prevent a lot of potential future grief. But the

\textsuperscript{391} Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht [1908],” 648.
\textsuperscript{393} Hirschfeld, “Jahresbericht 1902/3,” 1321.
comment also had the unfortunate effect of doing little to dispel the later belief that Hirschfeld was a practiced rumormonger.

This suspicion was later reinforced by testimony in the second Moltke trial. Berlin Police Commissioner Hans von Tresckow testified that police headquarters maintained a three-part list of known homosexuals. The first part, an abbreviated version, was made available to the Kaiser; the second, shown to police leadership; and the third, for the WhK and Hirschfeld. In his testimony, Tresckow remarked that notes about Eulenburg’s homosexual activities in Vienna and Berlin were only on the portion of the list accessible to Hirschfeld.394

In the Bülow trial, both Brand and Gehlsen alleged that Hirschfeld regularly confirmed or denied rumors about the supposed homosexuality of prominent citizens and then supplied the information to journalists, including Gehlsen. In assessing that accusation, the Vossische Zeitung editors noted that such actions had “nothing in common with ‘scientific’ practices. And it is likewise, not ‘humanitarian.’ . . . The tactics of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee [WhK] . . . are totally appropriate, [if the goal is] not to overcome resistance to the repeal of Paragraph 175, but significantly to strengthen it.”395 Hirschfeld strenuously denied the allegation in the courtroom, but the press maintained their doubts.

394 Linsert, Kabale und Liebe, 476; on the list kept by the Berlin police, see Tresckow, Von Fürsten, 164–65.
395 “Der Prozeß Brand.”
Last, and perhaps most painfully for Hirschfeld, his scientific credibility was doubted. The *Berliner Tageblatt* noted that Hirschfeld, Brand, and Gehlsen had all “dug with apparent fondness in this filth.” But they nonetheless reserved special condemnation for Hirschfeld. “Perhaps the species, which Dr. Hirschfeld represents is the ugliest and most embarrassing of all. A combination of so-called science and gossip delights uncritical simpletons, but appears to others as extremely tasteless speculation.”

The questionable nature of Hirschfeld’s science of sexology seemed confirmed when Moltke’s second trial against Harden convened on December 18, 1907. Hirschfeld again appeared on the witness stand. This time, he officially retracted his earlier forensic opinion about Moltke’s homosexuality. He asserted that it had been based on the assumed veracity of Moltke’s ex-wife’s statements. But in this trial, her testimony had already been thoroughly discredited by a series of expert medical witnesses who declared her to be a “classical hysterical.” When a verdict was rendered on January 4, 1908, Moltke’s reputation was cleared and Harden was convicted of libel and sentenced to four months in prison—a sentence that he would ultimately not have to serve thanks to a private settlement reached with Moltke in 1908.

For the conservative press, the outcome was also celebrated as a restoration of the aristocracy’s honor, symbolized by the tradition of close friendship—an argument which had also been advanced in Eulenburg’s testimony. In both the Brand trial and the second Harden trial, Eulenburg gave strikingly similar statements in defense of the nobility of

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396 “Das Urteil im Brand-Prozeß.”

397 Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal,” 244.
close, intimate friendships. The *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, editorial voice of the conservative Agrarian League, offered this encomium to Eulenburg’s testimony:

Like a swan emerging from filthy muck, Eulenburg’s honor arose snow white and silvery bright from all of the falsehoods that were put on the record in the Harden trials and the case in which Count Moltke was declared not guilty. Neither a political nor a moral speck of suspicion remains on him. . . . [His testimony] was evidence of the most beautiful and wonderful thing that we Germans call our own: friendship! Anyone who is familiar with Eulenburg’s poetry, knew that this testimony was bound to come. And I knew him, as do thousands of men and noble women in German lands, as the singer of friendship.

The passage ends with assurance that Eulenburg had restored “honor” to the epithet “The Harpist.”398

Nonetheless, even before a decision was rendered in the second Harden trial, those closest to Kuno Moltke and Eulenburg seemed to believe that a particular late-Romantic sensibility had reached its end. Particularly in Moltke’s social circles, the trials were viewed not only an assault on noble tradition, but also as a more fundamental clash between generations. Those sentiments were captured by Harry Graf Kessler (1868–1937)—a writer, diplomat, museum director, and patron of the arts. Kessler was an inveterate diarist and seemingly omnipresent member and observer of Prussian high society. In his typically incisive manner, he recorded a breakfast he attended at the home of Cornelia Richter (1842–1922), daughter of German composer Giacomo Meyerbeer. She regularly convened a celebrated musical and literary salon at her villa in Wannsee. On this occasion, her son, Gustav Giacomo (1869–1943)—a painter, writer, and friend of

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398 *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, November 29, 1907, morning edition.
Kessler’s since their university days—dined with them and the conversation turned to Moltke and the newly convened second trial:

Had breakfast at the Richters’ with Vandervelde. Moltke was there yesterday for breakfast. Frau Richter said he was inwardly quite dead. He was almost indifferent to the trial; he just wanted it to end. Musch [Gustav’s nickname] thought that an element in the trial was that it was a struggle between two generations, two worldviews: the sentimental and the modern, where the sentimental was an abomination. It was actually a trial like that of Socrates, only reversed. This time, the elder stood accused before the younger and that was particularly tragic. In Hebbel’s *Maria Magdalena* [a three-act tragedy written in 1844 by Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863)], one looked at this sentimental disposition as the new arrival on the scene: the father turned with disgust away from the young people that “move their church service into the open countryside,” etc. Today we are to view this perspective in Moltke and Eulenburg in the trial as obsolete, hard to understand, abnormal, and disgusting. Here would be the source of the excitement, the symbolism of the struggle.\(^{399}\)

Alas, the audience that mattered the most for Eulenburg, the royal audience, never forgave or welcomed him back to his entourage. Harden orchestrated a trial in Munich between himself and the Bavarian editor Anton Städele in order to present evidence of Eulenburg’s previous sexual involvement with a dairy farmer and a fisherman in Bavaria. In the trial’s proceedings, both of these men appeared as witnesses and confessed to sexual relations with Eulenburg in the period from 1881–83.\(^{400}\) This testimony served as incontrovertible evidence for the state prosecutor, who promptly arrested Eulenburg for perjury on May 8, 1908.\(^{401}\) News of the impending trial was shattering for the Kaiser, who


\(^{400}\) For more on the history of Eulenburg’s relationship with these men, Georg Riedel and Jakob Ernst, see Röhl, “Eulenburg. Zu einem Lebensbild,” 138.

proceeded to alternate between worrying states of intense anger and despair as he realized his closest friend was now irretrievably lost.\textsuperscript{402}

The perjury trial convened on June 29, 1908, but after Eulenburg collapsed during a recess, it was postponed until his health could improve. In the course of a hearing held in Eulenburg’s hospital on July 17, Eulenburg again passed out. His poor health ultimately allowed for the trial to be quietly suspended for more than a decade, and the charge in effect dropped. Eulenburg retreated in social isolation to Liebenberg until his death in 1921.

**Political Consequences**

The Reichstag elections in January 1907 had barely altered the body’s earlier composition from the last election, held in 1903. The percentage of the vote captured by the largest party, the Social Democrats, decreased from 31.7 percent in 1903 to 28.9 percent in 1907. The Left Liberals achieved slight gains, increasing their share from 6.6 percent to 7.8 percent. The German Reich Party (Deutsche Reichspartei, DRP)—positioned between the German Conservative Party and the National Liberals—also increased from 3.5 percent in 1903 to 4.2 percent in 1907. But the party was now the tiny remains of its former self.\textsuperscript{403} Finally, the anti-Semitic factions went from 2.5 percent in 1903 to 3.3 percent in 1907. For the most part, the changes for the other major and minor

\textsuperscript{402} Röhl, *Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss*, 577–79.

\textsuperscript{403} First entering the federal Reichstag elections in 1871, the DRP was previously the closest thing to a Bismarckian party during his period as chancellor. The party had offered unqualified support for German unification, as well as Bismarck’s Anti-Socialist Laws and the *Kulturkampf*. It peaked with 13.6 percent of the vote in the Reichstag election of 1878.
parties were negligible. But the extent to which the social and cultural landscape had altered considerably with regard to homosexuality was reflected in the speeches and actions of the delegates.

Just as he had in 1897, 1898, 1900, and 1904, Hirschfeld presented a petition to the Reichstag on April 12, 1907 requesting the elimination of Paragraph 175 from the criminal code. With revisions to the criminal code again under consideration by delegates, he was initially hopeful. These hopes, already fading as the Brand trial began, vanished by the second Moltke trial’s conclusion in January 1908. Even Hirschfeld had to acknowledge the dramatically altered mood of the public—that mood was now openly homophobic, with specific animus toward the circle of would-be reformists.

In the Hamburger Fremdenblatt, Reichstag delegate Dr. Siegfried Heckscher (1870–1921) of the Free-Minded Union—a liberal party in the pro-government, imperialist Bülow-Bloc, along with the German Conservative and National Liberal parties—urged strengthening of Paragraph 175’s provisions. In an essay published on October 31, 1907, he declared that “pederasty is a backslide into barbarism; homosexuality is the morality of dogs. This must be expressed strongly and clearly. Education has the task to strengthen the will; criminal law to isolate the weak-willed, so that disease and moral decay of a few does not become a national epidemic.

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[Volksseuche], which in its devastating course would destroy the glorious hopes of an incomparable culture.”

There was a pronounced sense that the unprecedented public discussions of sex represented a real loss of innocence for the country. On November 28, 1907, National Liberal Party leader Ernst Bassermann (1854–1917) proclaimed from the floor of the Reichstag that he was aghast. As the result of the scandals, newspapers regularly contained explicit material. He opined that he could no longer leave the paper lying around for fear that unattended children would read the contents. Furthermore, he fretted that the interest and attention paid by the foreign press was negatively influencing international perceptions of German morality and the future of the nation.

Later on February 20, 1908, Wilhelm August Otto Varenhorst (1865–1944) spoke on the floor for the nobility, diplomats, and government ministers who formed the core support of his small party, the German Reich Party. In his remarks, Varenhorst was particularly appalled that the private lives of the trial participants were exposed for the public scrutiny of all. Worse, “Thousands of people who previously had not even the remotest notion” of homosexuality were now “informed of these things and tempted to try them out with their own bodies”—a consequence that he found both “questionable

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407 *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*, vol. 229, XII. Legislaturperiode, 1. Session (1907/09), 1908, 1890 (November 28, 1907).
and unfortunate.” And he called for the Reichstag to strengthen legislation that allowed judges to close their courtrooms when morally sensitive topics were under discussion.\footnote{Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, vol. 230, XII. Legislaturperiode, 1. Session (1907/09), 1908, 3299 (February 20, 1908).}

In the Reichstag, only the stalwart Social Democratic leader August Bebel spoke in support of removing Paragraph 175 with an impassioned plea on November 29, 1907.\footnote{Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, 1908, 229:1910 (November 29, 1907).} With sadness, Hirschfeld concluded that “the educated middle class” now produced the most vehement spokesmen of “the anti-homosexual movement.” He was especially alarmed that support had eroded among socialist delegates and that the “psychic epidemic” had spread to the far left.\footnote{Hirschfeld, “Einleitung und Situations-Bericht [1909],” 20; See also Grumbach, “Die Linke und das Laster. Arbeiterbewegung und Homosexualität zwischen 1870 und 1933,” 26–27.} Any hope of political support for eliminating the statute was lost by late 1907.

The progressive \emph{Breslauer Zeitung} correctly summarized the situation in November 1907. It invited its readers to imagine if anyone in the Reichstag dared to propose eliminating Paragraph 175:

What would happen? A storm of indignation would go through the Reichstag, expressions of outrage would come in heaps from all over the country. At the most, the Social Democrats might have the courage to vote for such a proposal, even now after the repulsiveness of the two trials, after the revelation of the unprecedented ease with which defamatory allegations were made. We consider it to be a positive development that after the deserved shipwreck experienced by the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, public life will be freed from these downright disgusting discussions from now on.\footnote{Breslauer Zeitung, November 18, 1907.}

The final political casualty of the Eulenburg Affair was Chancellor Bülow. In the aftermath of the scandal, he never completely regained the trust of the Kaiser. Already in
a somewhat precarious position prior to the trial, he certainly tried to mollify both the emperor and the public. Following his appearance at the Brand trial, Bülow proclaimed from the rostrum of the Reichstag, “no one can doubt the moral earnestness of our Kaiser and his consort, whose family life provides the entire country with a fine model.” He continued with a damning allusion to Eulenburg, “Camarilla is not a German word. Camarilla is a foreign poisonous plant, and no one has sought to transplant this poisonous plant to Germany without great harm for the sovereign and great harm to the people.”

Yet his power over the Kaiser was further undermined by the Daily Telegraph Affair of November 1908. He was increasingly isolated from the Kaiser’s decision-making and in July 1909, he was dismissed as chancellor.

**Collapse**

1908 was the year when the broader German public, expressing itself across the full political spectrum, turned against broadening social acceptance of homosexuality and homoeroticism. De facto practice tightened up, and any hopes for de jure reform disappeared. The aftermath of the Eulenburg Affair marked the closure of a remarkable decade of public discussion of male sexuality that began with the establishment of the WhK and was followed by Der Eigene’s definitive shift in focus to “masculine culture” in 1900.

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412 Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, 1908, 229:1880 (November 28, 1907), as quoted in Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal,” 234. Bülow’s remarks are almost identical to those from an earlier speech by him on the floor of the Reichstag when the Eulenburg Affair was beginning; cf. Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, vol. 5, XI. Legislaturperiode, 2. Session (1905/06), 1906, 3650 (November 14, 1906). Röhl interprets these first remarks as evidence of Bülow’s responsibility for instigating the affair; see Röhl, Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss, 553–54.
In this broader tragedy, there are layers of irony in the situations of each principal. All sincerely believed that they were acting with only the most honorable intentions—whether it was the importance of exposing hypocrisy for Brand, crusading against political intrigue, in the case of Harden, or earnestly testifying on the burgeoning scientific understanding of sexuality for Hirschfeld. Even Eulenburg does not seem disingenuous in his testimony, maintaining a distinction in his mind between the heights of loyal friendship and the occasional youthful dalliance with members of the lower class. But to a public jaded by nearly five years of allegations of homosexuality in the uppermost reaches of society and the military, the entire lot were the same—all guilty of spreading rumors and exploiting private lives for political purposes.

The conclusion of Brand’s trial at the end of 1907 was the moment when the public lost patience. The *Vossische Zeitung* concluded its coverage of the Brand trial with:

> So advanced are the goings-on of homosexuals, that even the first officer of the Reich is forced to give depositions about his sexual feelings in court. In fact, it is shameful for the German people. It’s like an epidemic disease. But if the signs do not deceive, then we are past the high point, and the recovery is not far off. We said on Tuesday night, the trial against Brand will not only serve the cleanliness, but also bring about a wholesome purification of the air.\(^{413}\)

Revelations about Eulenburg and Moltke would continue as the other trials progressed, but the nation—specifically, the educated, middle class—had exhausted its collective

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\(^{413}\) “Der Prozeß Brand.”
attention for the matter. Contemporaries, including Hirschfeld, would look back and see the Brand trial as the nadir of the scandals.

Even though attention waned, the air was far from purified. A letter from Eulenburg to Moltke in the summer of 1907, still in the early months of the scandal, deserves to be quoted at length:

At the moment when the freshest example of the modern age, a Harden, criticized our nature, stripped our ideal friendship, laid bare the form of our thinking and feeling which we had justifiably regarded all our lives as something obvious and natural, in that moment, the modern age, laughing cold-bloodedly, broke our necks. . . . The new concepts of sensuality and love stamp our nature as weak, even unhealthily weak. And yet we were also sensual, not any less than the moderns. But this area lay strictly segregated; it did not impose itself as an end in itself. Family, art, friendship, and all our ideals were completely divorced from sensuality and from that which we regarded only as dirt, even if it might have ruled us here or there in those unconscious reciprocal effects which characterize mankind.

Eulenburg’s remarks reflected the increasingly common conflation of modernity and the emerging mass public with Jews, like Harden and Hirschfeld, and attacks on the traditional pillars of Prussian society. Eulenburg’s use of the words “dirt” and “filth,” here and throughout his courtroom appearances, to describe homosexuality were also typical for the era. As James Steakley demonstrated in his examination of political cartoons related to the scandal, dozens employed dogs, pigs, and excrement in reference

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to homosexuality, confirming the hardened perception that it was subhuman and animalistic.\textsuperscript{417}

In the public mind, those perceptions were blended with anti-Semitic rhetoric. Jews and homosexuals were conflated as schemers, intriguers, and shadowy operators, eager to exploit opportunity for personal gain and without regard for the impact on society at large. Wilhelm later wrote in 1927 that the whole affair had been “the first step” of a conspiracy started by “international Jewry” that led in 1918 to German defeat and his abdication.\textsuperscript{418} And in the midst of the scandal, Edgard Count von Wedel, a gay nobleman and chamberlain of Wilhelm II, recorded in his diary about Harden, “Does this Jew actually rule in Prussia, deposing generals and ambassadors?”\textsuperscript{419} An anti-Semitic interpretation of the Eulenburg Affair, presenting Hirschfeld and Harden as Jewish co-conspirators against German morals, would persist in the national memory and was newly exploited in the 1930s.

There were also more rapidly felt effects of the scandal as convictions for same-sex activity under the provisions of Paragraph 175 increased nearly fifty percent. In the period from 1903–7 the annual average was 363 convictions. The number rose to an average of 542 convictions in the years 1909–13. Notably, 1908 was the one year when

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\item \textsuperscript{417} Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal,” 255.
\item \textsuperscript{418} Wilhelm II to Fritz-Wend Prince zu Eulenburg, September 8, 1927, as quoted in Röhl, “Eulenburg. Zu einem Lebensbild.”
\item \textsuperscript{419} Diary entry of Edgard von Wedel, June 17, 1907, as quoted in Hans von Tresckow, \textit{Von Fürsten und anderen Sterblichen: Erinnerungen eines Kriminalkomissars} (Berlin: F. Fontane, 1922), 183, cited in Steakley, “Iconography of a Scandal,” 238.
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\end{footnotesize}
convictions dropped, to 282. Hirschfeld accounted for the drop by noting that homosexuals were especially cautious during the scandal and its immediate aftermath.

Hirschfeld also reported a precipitous and rapid drop in the WhK’s finances. During 1908, donations to the organization dropped by half and its normally robust outreach efforts operated on barely half of the usual budget. By the time that Hirschfeld wrote his annual report in August 1909, the organization’s premier publication, the *Jahrbuch*, had already been reduced to a quarterly. Its total pages per year were less than half offered by the previous publication. The organization’s coffers for operating expenses were also dangerously bare. For Brand, his own financial difficulties and period of imprisonment meant that he had already ceased publishing *Der Eigene* at the end 1906. He would not resume regular publication until late 1919.

In 1908, what remained then of the movement to eliminate Paragraph 175 were two loosely affiliated groups whose leaders personally distrusted and outright loathed one another. Gone were any realistic aspirations for greater public acceptance of homosexuality in a society where it was now reviled by the public at large. The public activities of both the WhK and the GdE entered a period of enforced dormancy that effectively lasted until the end of the First World War.

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Throughout his life, Adolf Brand exhibited an unwavering faith in the superiority of German culture. In the years leading up to the First World War, it became particularly pronounced in the general spirit of hyper patriotism that pervaded the national political atmosphere. For Brand, his nationalism found newly passionate expression in his growing interest in ancient Germanic myths and symbols. This fascination was shared with the artist Fidus and the two collaborated on cover designs filled with runes and Teutonic symbolism for unrealized versions of Der Eigene and other publications in 1913–14.

In this same period, Brand began to express a profound anti-Semitism in his private correspondence. Brand’s anti-Semitism built on socially acceptable prejudices against Jews as a dangerously unassimilated population, which wielded inordinate economic power and influence in German finance and society. For Brand, Hirschfeld was the figurative lens that focused this broader, corrosive bigotry into visceral personal resentments and hatred. When reflecting on Hirschfeld’s role in the Eulenburg Affair, Brand came to believe he had witnessed a prime example of how Jews actively colluded with those in power to negatively influence German society. In private correspondence, Brand unabashedly acknowledged this belief.\[423\]

\[423\] For identification of the surviving letters, this chapter is indebted to work first published in Herzer, “Antisemitismus und Rechtsradikalismus bei Adolf Brand.”
When *Der Eigene* returned to regular publication with the establishment of the Weimar Republic, Brand did not personally write any essays offering these opinions. Instead, he made a series of editorial decisions in 1924–25 that allowed others to use the pages of the journal to virulently attack Hirschfeld and Jews in general. The very little of his personal correspondence that survives makes it otherwise very difficult to trace exactly how his racism may have grown or changed in inflection over the course of the Weimar Republic’s turbulent existence.

Nonetheless, *Der Eigene* was always a direct extension of Brand’s personal beliefs and cultural obsessions. As a result, his political commentary in the journal in the late 1920s, and his elisions in particular, offer additional insight. Brand was a consistent and staunch supporter of the Social Democrats and used *Der Eigene* to caution readers about supporting right-wing parties. In warning readers away from supporting right-wing parties, he was interested in curbing the political power and influence of Prussian conservatives that he believed had not only backed Eulenburg and Bülow, but were prone to support a return to power of a hypocritical monarchy. His complaints did not critique the reactionary content of conservative politics, but instead were a product of his perennial obsession with combating hypocrisy. As always, he was suspicious of authority in general.

This final chapter will examine in as much depth as possible, Brand’s relationship to both anti-Semitism and right-wing politics in the period from roughly 1910 through 1933. The last half of the chapter will recount the final years of Élisàr von Kupffer before
turning to the ambiguous and ambivalent legacy left by the GdE and its members on the history of sexuality.

**Anti-Semitism in Private and by Proxy**

Following Brand’s release from prison at the end of 1910, he sought to rebuild his life. In a January 1911 newsletter to supporters, he announced his intention to establish a new studio and rededicate himself to photography.424 From July 1911 until December 1912, Brand issued six numbers of a small gazette titled *Extrapost des Eigenen*. For the most part, the content focused on lobbing accusations of perjury at Bülow and Hirschfeld, offering vague hints at unexplained darker intrigues, and insisting on his victimhood in the affair’s outcome.

In the late summer of 1912, Brand appears to have reached a kind of peace treaty with Hirschfeld in the interest “of the entire homosexual movement.” He promised to no longer disparage Hirschfeld or the WhK. Again in a newsletter for supporters, he noted that the “mutual enemy” would be fought by the two organizations, “one with purely scientific, the other with purely artistic weapons.”425

This may well have been the public state of affairs, but in private Brand certainly had reached no personal sense of peace with Hirschfeld. Instead, Brand’s public stance was a recognition of his thorough loss of credibility as the result of the Bülow trial in 1907. As we have seen, there was very little chance of winning back the support or

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interest of the broader middle class. But more critical for the immediate survival of his organization, potential supporters—especially those would otherwise agree with his philosophy—were no longer taking him seriously.

For instance, members of the secessionist wing of the WhK—who ascribed to a masculinist philosophy quite similar to the GdE’s and were also bitterly disappointed in Hirschfeld—nonetheless quoted with approval commentary critical of Brand from a local Berlin weekly. A review of Brand’s published collection of “new” documents related to Hirschfeld’s participation in the Bülow trial, concluded, “Brand has often been so undiscriminating as to take any such gossip at face value and to construct aggressive articles around it and then put it out in the world. And the latest fruit of this kind is the brochure against Hirschfeld, which will disappear into oblivion, like so much else that is ineffectual, because no one takes the writer Brand seriously.”

Brand needed at least the appearance of reconciliation with the WhK to move forward with rebuilding the GdE and resuming publication of *Der Eigene*.

In personal correspondence, Brand continued to castigate Hirschfeld. Some of the very few private letters from Brand that survive, are letters to the artist Fidus written from 1913 to 1916. Unfortunately, the replies of Fidus have been lost. The letters offer an opportunity to glimpse the extent to which nationalism and anti-Semitism were incorporated into Brand’s projects in the period. In a letter to Fidus, dated April 22, 1913, Brand began with a racist’s typical disclaimer that he was not racist:

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It goes without saying that as someone who has belonged to the Social Democratic Party for the last ten years, I am not driven by racial or national hatred. However, on the other hand, my eyes and ears are open to the terrible phenomena which threaten to become social and national dangers. It is quite clear that they cannot be addressed by head-in-the-sand policies [Vogel-Strauss-Politik]. Since my school days, I have had very dear friends among the Jews, who feel, think, and act just as German as you and me. But you cannot deny that a majority of Jews still consider themselves the chosen people and despite adopting our language and rights, remain a separate people [Volk im Volke]. As a result of their business superiority, they gain ever more ground and power. And thanks to their possession of money, they are today the determining factor in art and literature, in the press, and in politics.

Of course, it would be ridiculous to speak of a pure Germanism [Germanentum] on the soil of the March [Brandenburg] or any of the German Empire. But the Celts and the Wends are almost completely absorbed into Germanism and have been shaped along with the German people because they have both Germanic blood and a Germanic disposition. The majority of Jews, however, are not merged with our people, but retain their own character and strive for supremacy. That is the difference. And the necessity for us to draw this conclusion grows. . . . And to choose an example from my own circle: Dr. Hirschfeld could never play the role of a court-appointed expert and a police liaison, could never be the tool [of authority] that he has become—if he were not a Jew!427

Brand’s comments were made in the context of planning a new publication, Wegwalt, with a subtitle, “Newspaper for the German Sort [Art] and Race, Village Culture and Heritage Preservation.”428 In several letters from April 14–26, 1913, Brand is primarily concerned that the artwork for the magazine include recognizably Germanic symbols. In one letter, Brand explained that the planned publication derived its name from the mythical figure Wodan, the pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon deity. “Wegwalt

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428 Adolf Brand to Fidus, April 26, 1913, copy in GdE/Brand, Nr. 2 Korrespondenz, SM.
[another name for a hiker] is the young Wodan, who came upon this earth as a wanderer, in his radiating divine beauty, to be among humanity to seek beauty and happiness.”

Money continued to be an issue throughout this period and Brand was unable to produce more than seven issues of Wegwalt in total during 1913–14. Each slim issue averaged about fifteen pages, never exceeding twenty-five. The content primarily consisted of homoerotic poetry and historical prose, almost all of which previously appeared in Der Eigene.

Three years later, during the First World War, the same thoughts and concerns were part of Brand’s planning for a return of Der Eigene. In surviving letters from 1916, Brand continued to draw on Germanic mythology and symbolism when he wrote to Fidus and requested a potential cover illustration for a new issue. He suggested that the artist possibly draw something related to a favorite quote from Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “A friend should be the festival of the earth.” The quote had already appeared in numerous issues of Der Eigene and functioned as an unofficial motto for the GdE. Brand further suggested adorning the quote with a swastika and if not, then utilizing the publication’s latest subtitle, “A magazine for masculine culture.”

In planning for the publication’s return, Brand is emphatic:

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431 Adolf Brand to Fidus, April 25, 1916, copy in GdE/Brand, Nr. 2 Korrespondenz, SM.
I stress again, the new *Eigene* has nothing to do with homosexuality! It advocates a liberal [großzügige] cultural and racial politics in the sense of Nietzsche. But it represents the old Germanic ideal of friendship as the highest and the only safe way to a truly masculine society, such as, for example, the young philosopher Hans Blüher longed for as a shining goal in his powerful *Wandervogel* book. . . . This Germanic ideal of friendship, the morally and politically effective *Männerbund*, found its most holy and deepest symbol in blood brotherhood and in *Minnetrinken*.432

The medieval German tradition of *Minnetrinken* was a ritual ceremony based in the Last Supper of Christ, but done in the context of celebrating the brotherhood of those assembled.

By early May of 1916, Brand was advertising for sale a portfolio of his nude male photography titled *Deutsche Rasse* (German Race) and announcing the imminent return of *Der Eigene*. In advertisements, he also began to again refer to *Wegwalt*—but this time as a “new photography publication” and as an “addition and supplement to the *Eigene*.”433

Less than two weeks later, Brand wrote Fidus a short note that his home had been searched by authorities and his nude photos and other materials were confiscated. He was certain that the search had less to do with the perceived immorality of those materials and more to do with revenge. He also directly traced the origins of his anti-Semitic sentiments to his bitter experience in the Bülow trial:

Independent minds are now very inconvenient for those in power. I have written my defense based on my Germanic conception of friendship as camaraderie [*Kampfgenossenschaft*]. I have also made no secret of my anti-Semitic sentiments to which I arrived through the political blackmailers and a thoroughly bankrupt

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432 Ibid.
judiciary. Nevertheless, I will not lose my level-headedness. I have left only contempt for my enemies.\footnote{Brand to Fidus, May 24, 1916, personal collection of Manfred Herzer; reproduced in Herzer, “Antisemitismus und Rechtsradikalismus bei Adolf Brand,” 37.}

Following this incident, all of Brand’s publishing activities ceased for three years. In the last year of the First World War, Brand, now forty-five years old, married Elise Behrendt. The exact date of the wedding ceremony is unknown, but it probably took place in the summer of 1919.

On May 1, 1919 the first edition of a “news and advertising” gazette for the GdE appeared. On the first page, Brand reprinted the poem “Island of Eros,” which first appeared in Der Eigene in 1903. With its inviting call to travel to imagined “lands with our inclination,” one would initially think that the GdE was to again pursue an escapist direction. That notion is quickly dispelled by glancing through the first issue Der Eigene when it returned for the first time in thirteen years on November 15, 1919. The new volume (number seven) is simultaneously combative—eager to continue discussions of the Eulenburg Affair—and filled with hope for the new republic.\footnote{For discussions of Eulenburg, see Adolf Brand, “Justizkomödie und Volksbetrug. Zur Abschaffung des §175,” \textit{Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit} 7, no. 3 (December 6, 1919): 1–3; “Nach dem Ball,” \textit{Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit} 7, no. 9 (January 31, 1920): 2; “Das dunkelste Kapitel preußischer Justiz. Allerlei über die Gemeingefährlichkeit des §175,” \textit{Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit. Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur} 8, no. 5 (October 29, 1920): 49–51; the Krupp Affair is revisited in Adolf Brand, “Wilhelm der Wahnsinnige am ‘Grabe’ Krupps,” \textit{Der Eigene: Zeitschrift für Freundschaft und Freiheit. Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur} 8, no. 7 (November 12, 1920): 73–75.}

It was to appear weekly, and did so for the most part until February 1920. Der Eigene then appeared regularly on a nearly monthly basis until the summer of 1932. In the same period, a photography supplement, \textit{Rasse und Schönheit} (Race and Beauty), was issued as a

In Brand’s published writings during the Weimar Republic, he refrained from attacking Hirschfeld’s Jewish heritage. Nonetheless, the persistence of his anti-Semitism and its influence on his opinions is revealed in one article. In a 1924 overview of the differences between the GdE and WhK, Brand accounted for the seemingly insurmountable differences between the two groups as the result of Hirschfeld’s “Oriental attitude” in contrast with his own “Nordic” outlook. Brand wrote, “It was the eternally youthful, ancient and vast difference between sex and love generally, that unbridgeable contrast, to which the two leaders of the movement came to an irreconcilable outcome. These most basic phenomena of life were contrasted between Oriental and Nordic attitudes.”\footnote{Adolf Brand, “Gegen die Propaganda der Homosexualität, eine zeitgemäße Erinnerung,” Der Eigene: Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur 10, no. 9: Die “Tante”: Eine Spott- und Kampf-Nummer der Kunst-Zeitschrift Der Eigene (April 1925): 407.}

Brand revealed more in his editorial choices and careful omissions. He was comfortable using other authors as proxies for his own opinions, particularly when it came to attacking Hirschfeld and the WhK. In 1924, he published a muddled, anti-Semitic essay from Valentin Scherrdel. Ostensibly this was a reply to an essay that had appeared in the previous issue. That first essay was written by the respected Jewish journalist Kurt Hiller (1885–1972), who was active in the WhK and eventually took over
leadership of the organization from Hirschfeld in 1929. Hiller’s essay was a rather innocuous affair, whose most memorable quote was, “Whoever has not loved someone, cannot love his own people.” Scherrdel seized on the issue of “a people” (Volk) and styled his reply as representing an “ethnically German standpoint” belonging to a “völkisch point of view that believes the Jewish people to be racially and intellectually foreign.” Jews were depicted as superfluous and a hindrance to the establishment of a truly German culture.⁴³⁸

Beneath this scurrilous commentary, Brand distanced himself from the pro-military attitudes espoused by Scherrdel. The editor feebly offered that the essay was important for “advancing discussion.” But he made no comment about the anti-Semitic content of the remarks. Brand’s tacit approval of such articles continued in the very next issue. This time, he published an article from anarchist author Ewald Tscheck (1895–1945) opining that neither Hirschfeld nor Karl Heinrich Ulrichs deserved to be pioneers of homosexual emancipation because they lacked a deep feeling for German culture.⁴³⁹

Things continued in a similar vein in 1925. Brand published an article by the psychoanalyst Karl-Guenter Heimsoth. Heimsoth had previously coined the term “homophile” to describe all-male social groups and had several scientific publications to his credit.⁴⁴⁰ He was a member of the Nazi Party and later became a close associate of

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⁴⁴⁰ Karl-Guenter Heimsoth, Hetero- und Homophilie: eine neuorientierende An- und Einordnung der Erscheinungsbilder, der “Homosexualität” und der “Inversion” in Berücksichtigung der
Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA. The article explained that Freundesliebe was “foreign to the Jewish spirit” (Judengeist) and that Hirschfeld, as a Jew, was a threat to “German eros.”\textsuperscript{441} Again, Brand attached an editorial comment to the article. This time, “We are giving this scientifically objective article space, without identifying with every last detail (anti-Semitism) of the author.” In a subsequent issue, Brand published a reply to Heimsoth from a self-described “Jew born in Germany” speaking for a “free German people” and against “race hysteria.”\textsuperscript{442}

These were the last articles to explicitly deal with Jews and anti-Semitism in Der Eigene until the publication ceased in 1932. In the remaining years of the journal, Brand’s essays assessing political threats to the Weimar Republic, and about right-wing politics in particular, were nonetheless tied up with implicit considerations about Jews and anti-Semitic rhetoric.

**Defending the Republic, Failing to Confront Right-Wing Radicalism**

Brand’s many clashes with judicial and state authority during the Kaiserreich left him with no nostalgia for the old system. Despite the many tribulations and economic troubles suffered by the Weimar Republic, Brand was a consistent and unexpectedly

\textsuperscript{441} Heimsoth, “Freundesliebe oder Homosexualität. Der Versuch einer anregenden und scheinenden Klarstellung”; For further discussion on this essay, see Marita Keilson-Lauritz, “Tanten, Kerle und Skandale: Die Geburt des ‘modernen Homosexuellen’ aus den Flügelkämpfen der Emanzipation,” in Homosexualität und Staatsräson: Männlichkeit, Homophobie und Politik in Deutschland 1900-1945, ed. Susanne zur Nieden, Geschichte und Geschlechter 46 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005), 81–99.

staunch supporter of democracy. He thought that it provided the greatest opportunities for personal freedom and self-determination. By 1925 he was frustrated by the nature of parliamentary debate in the republic, but generally chose instead to grouse about his old bugbears: hypocrisy and secret maneuverings for political or personal gain. Specifically, his wrath seized on the widening gap between the moralizing rhetoric of conservative parties and the actual lived experiences of those parties’ members.

These obsessions can directly be traced back to Brand’s experiences in the Bülow trial. Some two decades later, Brand still clung to old resentments and harbored a visceral anger about perceived personal betrayals from that era. The enthusiasm with which he had previously joined the fight to eliminate Paragraph 175 was now primarily reserved for seeking redress for personal affronts. When aspects of those old offenses happened to overlap with resonant themes in contemporary political events, Brand was still capable of his typical full-throated condemnations. But those signature essays were markedly fewer in the years from 1925–32. Indeed, the content of Der Eigene during this period featured many reprints from past issues, many of which were close to thirty years old. As a result, the rare appearance of explicitly political content by Brand in this period is worth examining in closer detail.

In late 1926, Brand wrote an essay demanding that members of the GdE withhold support from any conservative party that agitated for the return of the Kaiser. It was a moment when Brand was able to productively harness his seemingly boundless capacity for indignation and transform it into a call for political action. Remembering the total denial of homosexual activity within the entourage of “Wilhelm the Last,” Brand
castigated the hypocrisy of the entire imperial court. Seizing on the damage caused to Germany’s reputation in the international press, he recalled that the court’s duplicity “stank abroad like a large latrine thanks to the pestilential existence of Paragraph 175.”

If conservative parties failed to heed the lesson of these past hypocrisies, Brand warned that prominent homosexuals within their ranks would not be overlooked. In particular, those in right-wing parties and “German nationalist circles” were threatened with a return to his old weapon of choice, *Weg über Leichen*. He would gleefully expose that, “They have the most Paragraph 175 cases to suppress. They have the largest scandals around their necks.”

In a separate essay published in the same fall 1926 issue, Brand advised GdE members to support only the Social Democratic, Communist, and the German Democratic parties in future Reichstag elections. These parties not only would potentially support the elimination of Paragraph 175, but also assured the “blooming and growth of the German republic, which must without question be protected, so that a similar insanity like the Eulenburg scandal never returns and the perception of the Vaterland is again badly shaken.” In both essays, it is Brand’s fixation on the past events of the Eulenburg Affair that sharpens his rhetoric and offers him a focused political goal.

The most significant political article written by Brand in the last half of the Weimar Republic is an essay titled “Unser Bekenntnis zur Republik” (Our commitment to

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444 Ibid., 79.
the republic), which appeared in Der Eigene at the end of 1926. The essay was a vigorous defense of the republic and a call to support “a liberal Socialism” that did not claim the “supremacy of any one race.”

The two-part essay began with an assessment of the state of the movement to repeal Paragraph 175. Brand first identified the “cardinal error” of Hirschfeld’s effort: abandoning arguments about rights of personal freedom in favor of the “incorrect and dead tracks [sic] of treating an illness.” After thirty years of work, he deemed the results of Hirschfeld’s work to be a “complete fiasco,” evidenced by the fact that more than half of the Reichstag continued to oppose the “simple right of self-determination over body and soul.” Brand declared, “Our opponents in the homosexual camp have trusted in the empty promises of courtiers and high officials, who never had the power to deliver on their word. They have brought a thousand considerations to the Kaiser, because they had no higher ambition than to bask for a moment in his favor and grace!” As usual, Brand also missed no opportunity to attack Hirschfeld personally, noting that his testimony in the Eulenburg Affair court trials was not done out of service to truth or scientific knowledge, but as a willing puppet of the Kaiser’s unspecified intrigues.

Having rejected Hirschfeld’s approach to currying favor, Brand celebrated political solutions reached by consensus as the only true guarantee of personal liberties:

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447 Ibid., 97.
448 Ibid., 99–100.
Therefore, there can be no doubt about the path that we must pursue. We will not achieve our goal with pretty words and legal subtleties, nor through scientific-humanitarian machinations, secret routes, and begging. We will achieve state and social recognition of the natural and moral existence of *Freundesliebe*, only if we courageously unite. Men and women must come together and proclaim the rallying cry: remain resolute and true to the republic, help a liberal socialism to victory, reject every form of nationalization, and save the future for us and Europe!\(^{449}\)

In Brand’s surviving ephemera, this one essay garnered the most letters of enthusiastic support. The thirty-odd expressions of gratitude and support sent between 1926 to 1928 encompassed a wide-range of young readers who identified themselves as everything from aspiring physicians and students of law to members of the *Wandervogel*.\(^{450}\)

Throughout his life, Brand remained a steadfast supporter of the Social Democrats. But as the Nazis surged in popularity at the polls between 1930 and 1932, Brand demonstrated an increasing willingness to look past stark political differences, if he could find even a little support for his vision of acceptance for intimate male relations. The increasing Nazi rhetoric against homosexuality hardly gave Brand pause. For him it was yet another opportunity to highlight hypocrisy within the leadership ranks of conservative and right-wing parties. The 1931 appointment of Ernst Röhm as SA chief of staff offered Brand an irresistible opportunity to pounce.

The Social Democratic newspaper *Münchner Post* had already used the occasion to expose the homosexuality of numerous lower-level members of the SA and to publish

\(^{449}\) Ibid., 107.
\(^{450}\) GdE/Brand, Nr. 7: *Der Eigene* im Urteil der Zeitgenossen, SM.
letters from Röhm exposing his homosexual attractions and liaisons. Brand followed suit with his own essay in 1931, *Politische Galgenvögel* (Political Rogues). He published it in *Eros*, the supplemental newsletter distributed to GdE members from 1926–32. As a point of departure, Brand used a recent article from the Nazi party organ *Völkischer Beobachter*. The article had declared that when the Nazi party came to power they would hang all homosexuals from the gallows. Brand wrote, “The Röhm case has finally opened the eyes of the German public to the fact that *precisely the most dangerous enemies of our fight are often homosexuals themselves*, who from political hypocrisy and mendacity consciously help to again and again destroy every moral success that we effect through our fight and through our work.”

Brand nevertheless did not slam the door shut to potential collaboration with members of any political party, so long as they weren’t hypocrites and shared Brand’s high estimation of male bonding. That openness extended to sympathy for Röhm as well:

The Röhm case has become therefore a warning example for the destructive and generally dangerous system of parliamentary injustice and political unscrupulousness altogether, which governs our whole legislation and under which all problems of civilization sadly suffer. In Röhm it touches a man as its victim who really deserves better.

Doubtless there are in every party—even in the National Socialist—enough decent and liberal-minded men who in their heart secretly stand on our side and for whom the ideals that we represent are also their ideals. If they will one day pluck up the courage to shake off their stubborn party morality, which daily condemns them to falsehood, then our fight will find strong assistance and

452 *Völkischer Beobachter*, June 24, 1931.
support from all sides and then will be the hour when we have finally won the first goal of our demands.\textsuperscript{454}

At least in 1931, Brand did not perceive the Nazis as a genuine threat. Seeing them instead as “mere theater” that covered for the more sinister machinations of conservative forces that would eagerly resume power if Hitler were made chancellor. Brand summarized the situation in 1931:

All who stand inimically opposed to the republic and who would like to shoot to death the battalions of workers loyal to the republic and its banners really have no fear of that red-light sign of National Socialism, but rather use it unscrupulously to promote their own dark plans, since they know with complete certainty that all this is mere theater and that they themselves will have the power in the state again immediately if Hitler, their ‘king,’ is the winner!”\textsuperscript{455}

Even with his earlier forceful defense of the republic, the absence of any direct commentary or criticism from Brand on the racial and anti-Semitic content of right-wing political thought leaves an ambivalent and troubling legacy. Attempts to clarify Brand’s changing politics are frustrated by the almost complete lack of surviving sources from the period of 1933 until his death in 1945. What remains are two documents that only intensify the uncertainty of Brand’s relationship to Nazi authority. One source is a seven-page, handwritten letter from Brand to the British Sexological Society written on November 19, 1933.\textsuperscript{456} The second is a brief account of Brand’s final days published by an acquaintance two decades after his death.\textsuperscript{457}

\textsuperscript{454} Brand, “Politische Galgenvögel,” 3, as quoted in Oosterhuis and Kennedy, \textit{Homosexuality and Male Bonding}, 238.
\textsuperscript{455} Brand, “Politische Galgenvögel,” 2, as quoted in Oosterhuis and Kennedy, \textit{Homosexuality and Male Bonding}, 237.
\textsuperscript{456} Brand to British Sexological Society, Secretary F.F. Bennett, November 19, 1933.
In the letter to the British society, Brand reported that his publishing business and home had been subject to five separate police raids and confiscations from May 3–November 15, 1933. Writing in desperation, he noted that the raids had left him “completely plundered, with nothing more to sell and am now financially ruined.” He estimated his losses at over 10,000 Marks but was resolved in his convictions. “I remain an individualist, continue to stand for private property and the private sector, fighting for the right to personal freedom and oppose any state-socialist experiment as inimical to freedom and a public danger.”

He also reported that in the spring of 1933 he was invited to Naples “by a wealthy friend of my work,” but was unable to travel because the police withheld his passport. A few weeks later, “a good acquaintance of mine, a Berlin businessman, who was already for many years a member of the National Socialist Party” went to the Berlin police headquarters with the goal of acquiring the passport. He learned that it would be made available immediately on condition of the payment of a 2,000 Mark deposit—an impossible sum for Brand to pay, particularly when his business inventory had been effectively destroyed.

One of the few people to visit Brand during his final years was an acquaintance, Richard Schultz. He recalled that though Brand experienced numerous home searches, confiscations, and interrogations in the final decade of his life, he was never arrested during the Third Reich. This surprising fact, and Brand’s earlier comment in the letter to

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458 Brand to British Sexological Society, Secretary F.F. Bennett, November 19, 1933, 7.
459 Ibid., 4.

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the sexological society about having a good friend and long-established member of the Nazi party, make it highly likely that someone with authority was protecting him.

Nonetheless, the loss of his publishing business and the depravations of war in Berlin left him destitute. Schultz reported that Brand sold his home in Wilhelmshagen and remained living in one room, while the others were rented to refugees. He was dependent upon state welfare and the occasional package of groceries delivered by Schultz on behalf of a “large grocer in the Sudetenland.” On those few visits, Schultz described a grim scene: Brand could only move with the help of crutches and “suffered under his immeasurable loneliness.”

An American bombing raid destroyed Brand’s home on February 26, 1945 and he and his wife perished in the basement. Schultz recalled the activity at Brand’s grave:

A few days later, the funeral was held together with seven to eight other victims. The Nazis used this for their own propaganda and took over the burial. Of his many earlier acquaintances, only I and two men came to the burial. The Kreisleiter [county leader] appeared in full uniform along with his retinue and swastika banners. Each casket was carried by six SA men. After the pastor said the benediction, the Kreisleiter spoke. He particularly celebrated Adolf Brand as “forerunner” and “pioneer” of the Third Reich and supporter of National Socialist ideas. The three of us watched with concern because we knew how much Adolf Brand despised the Nazis.

The gap between Schultz’s perception and the enthusiasm of the Kreisleiter is stark—and hard to resolve. Brand’s perennial problems with authority and resistance to any incursion on personal freedom, make it extremely hard to imagine that he would have been amenable to Nazi authoritarianism. On the other hand, the anti-Semitism and

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460 Schultz, “Im memoriam Adolf Brand.”
461 Ibid., 181.
extreme nationalism of the party may have been less problematic for him. As we have seen, Brand hardly hesitated to write the most thundering of denunciations, when he disagreed with a party or policy. The fact that he conspicuously avoided attacking the political and racial content of Nazism during its rise is striking, and perhaps damning.

Early on, Brand was also keenly aware of the potential attraction many in the GdE might have toward the Nazi party and other fascist organizations that glorified male comradeship in the context of war and battle. In 1925, Brand’s publishing company issued a short booklet by Georg Alfredy (1887–1926), a frequent contributor of poetry to Der Eigene from 1919–23. The booklet, Männerheldentum und Kamaradenliebe im Krieg (Male heroism and comrade love in war), was issued under the pseudonym Georg P. Pfeiffer and extolled the special form of male camaraderie forged in battle.462 It was an experience that Alfredy thought could bridge across the fractious party lines of the Reichstag:

Our youth is our future. To bring up a healthy, bodily strong, but also intellectually educated generation means the salvation of Germany’s future, means allowing our fatherland to again become great and mighty! Here the labor leader can reach out his hands to the German nationalists: both are working here for their goals and aims!

Similar sentiments were previously expressed in the 1925 edition of the GdE’s bylaws, where Brand wrote, “The GdE accepts men of all political creeds into its ranks. It is not a political organization and will not be taken in by any political party. In

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performing work that supports cultural activities, it does not rush into the vortex of party quarrels, because it needs the liberally minded and intelligent from all parties.\(^{463}\)

The pronounced democratic aspects of Brand’s vision after the First World War—expressed as a willingness to welcome anyone as members of the GdE regardless of party affiliation, as long as they supported his vision of same-sex love and intimate male kinship—may very well have opened the door to collaboration with, or at least protection from, well-placed local Nazi party members during the Third Reich.

This and the other disturbing aspects of Brand’s personality and politics cannot be easily dismissed. His is a deeply ambiguous legacy. His personal story is difficult to summarize and even harder to rehabilitate. It is neither broadly redemptive nor does he experience the very worst of Nazi political persecution. In addition, Brand’s utter contempt for homosexuals disrupts a teleological narrative of homosexual emancipation and increasing self-consciousness in the twentieth-century history of sexuality in Europe. As historians began examining the modern homosexual emancipation movement in earnest from the late 1970s onward, Brand and other members of the GdE were largely ignored. If mentioned at all, it was only in passing, where they were accurately, but dismissively, described as “militant” or “radical.”\(^{464}\) As a result, Brand’s story, with all of its troubling aspects, has been largely left to languish and without close examination.

\(^{463}\) Brand, *GdE Satzung*, 22.

Kupffer’s Last Esoteric Pursuits

Like other members of the GdE, Élisàr von Kupffer was also mostly forgotten after the Second World War. Even by the beginning of the First World War, his influence within the GdE was already diminishing rapidly. In fact, from 1908 until 1932, his literary work appeared in Der Eigene only three times. He contributed two poems—one of which was devoted to the memory of his beloved muse Adolf “Fino” Schmitz, killed in battle during the war—and a convoluted essay on the relationship between nature and his new religious faith, Klarismus. 465 A second essay contributed by his partner, Eduard von Mayer, offered an overview of Kupffer’s artistic career. 466 Otherwise, Kupffer was absent from the journal’s pages, as either an author or influential figure remarked on by other contributors.

One reason for Kupffer’s relative obscurity in this period, and later, is his increased devotion to promulgating his spiritual beliefs, to the exclusion of most other activities. In 1911, he and Mayer founded Akropolis, a private publisher in Munich dedicated exclusively to issuing religious materials detailing the tenets of their evolving spiritual practice. Programmatic texts were issued sporadically until 1920. The most important were a pair of foundational texts for Klarismus, published in 1911: Hymnen der Heiligen Burg (Hymns of the holy fortress) and Ein neuer Flug und eine Heilige Burg (A

466 Mayer, “Elisarion und sein Werk.”

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new flight and a holy fortress). The two men also attempted to expand the reach of their ideas by establishing Klaristic Societies in Weimar in 1911 and in Zurich in 1913.

In the years leading up to the First World War, Kupffer and Mayer travelled throughout Italy. In order to escaping mounting anti-German sentiment, they finally chose in 1915 to settle in Muralto, Switzerland. Kupffer began concentrating almost exclusively on the monumental Klarwelt mural discussed in chapter three. Individual portions of the mural were first displayed at a gallery in 1924. Then, beginning in 1926, the Elisarion Society was established by Kupffer as the sole organization for distributing promotional materials for his Klaristic faith.

This push to provide Klarismus with a central, organized structure—or at least the veneer of an established presence—culminated in Kupffer’s desire to construct a temple. Kupffer envisioned a Gothic-inspired building that would act not only as a religious center and meeting place for believers, but also as a central location to view all of his paintings. The building was to be based on plans that had been in various stages of gestation since 1912. The interior organization of the temple had already been described in 1911’s Ein Neuer Flug. Kupffer’s first choice was to build the temple in Eisenach, Germany. But the plans were scuttled following a contentious debate in 1926 within the town about the homoerotic nature of Kupffer’s artwork, as well as the general inscrutability of his religious beliefs.  

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467 Kupffer (writing as Elisarion), Ein neuer Flug; Hymnen der Heiligen Burg (Munich: Verlag Akropolis, 1913).
468 See discussion of Eisenach controversy in Ricci, Ritter, Tod und Eros, 136–43.
Instead, property was acquired in Minusio, Switzerland and the Sanctuarium Artis Elisarion opened there on August 1, 1927. The two-story building combined architectural elements from both fortresses and cathedrals into a gray-stoned, neo-Gothic monument. The building served as both religious sanctuary and residence for Kupffer and Mayer until their respective deaths.

After nearly fifteen years of work, the *Klarwelt* mural was completed in 1930. From then until 1937, Kupffer was almost fully devoted to attending to the needs of temple visitors and rarely wrote or painted. He also spent significant time raising funds to construct a temple rotunda to house the finished mural. That addition was successfully completed in July 1939.\footnote{Kupffer, *Aus einem wahrhaftigen Leben*, 321.} But the start of the Second World War reduced an initial flood of visitors to a trickle. From then until his death in 1942, Kupffer worked in obscurity, despairing for the future of his project. Mayer worked for the following four years to inventory over 2,400 sketches, illustrations, designs, and paintings by Kupffer. Shortly before Mayer’s death in 1960, the temple’s archive was selectively purged to remove all personal correspondence. The building was bequeathed to the local municipality as a cultural center, but was abandoned and left to deteriorate. Many of Kupffer’s paintings and other works were lost or stolen in the intervening years. Since 1981, the building has again functioned as both community center and archive for Kupffer’s work, although the building’s walls are largely bare of his paintings. The sizable *Klarwelt* mural is no longer on display and is currently housed in a shed on the property of the former Monte Verità colony in Ascona, approximately five kilometers west of Kupffer’s temple building.
Coda: A Conflicted Legacy

In retrospect, the founding of the Weimar Republic was a time of steep decline leading to virtual obscurity for the GdE and its members. This was so despite the fact that the republic, at least in stated principles, seemed to offer more permissive social mores and a sexually indulgent atmosphere when compared to the previous era of the Kaiser. In fact, the Weimar Republic retained Paragraph 175 and the Reichstag considered strengthening its provisions to include punishing lesbianism. Together, the members of the organization were an aging collective, functioning more as loosely-affiliated group of individuals, than as an organization with a focused cultural or political purpose. Most members were now marginal figures, or, like Kupffer, pursuing projects in isolated self-exile. In sum, their collective hopes for a future generation of enlightened individuals to carry forward their vision of personal freedom and male intimacy in a reformed society were unrealized.

Instead, each member pursued his own interests and projects with an increasingly narrow focus and largely abandoned any pretense of engagement with a broader public. Despite such a marked lack of public acceptance, none of these men worked with any less fervor or certainty about the fundamental correctness of their own ideas. Social and criminal persecution, both very real and imagined, had been a constant part of many of their lives and was critical to their creative endeavors. More importantly, it had always fueled their individual and collective sense of rebellion and fired their literary work with righteous indignation.
In particular, Kupffer seemed assured that while his beliefs—religious or sexual—were the subject of no small degree of ridicule, he stood undiminished as an artistic figure. Saint Sebastian was venerated by both Mayer and Kupffer. Mayer wrote that Kupffer’s “sorrows, failures, and criticisms were to him like the arrows that wounded the saint.”\textsuperscript{470} Just as Sebastian withstood quivers of arrows to be rendered only more saintly, more loved, so would Elisarion arise as a revered figure.\textsuperscript{471} Kupffer also posed as Sebastian in nude photos and Mayer left behind a “Sebastian Archive” of roughly 240 photographs, illustrations, and publications that he used for his art historical research and consultation for the construction of a narrative for visitors viewing the Klarwelt mural.

This perception of martyrdom permitted not just Kupffer and Mayer, but also Brand and other members of the GdE to view themselves as threatened guardians of German culture. They sincerely believed that they could renew the nation, if only their views were given proper consideration by a blinkered, fearful middle-class. Of course, their hopes for eliminating Paragraph 175 were unrealistic in a Reichstag designed to be ineffectual during the Kaiserreich and then beset by deepening political and economic crises in the Weimar years.

Nonetheless, much of the material published in Der Eigene was adamant in its insistence that the cultural values of GdE members were shared by the vast majority of German society. In particular, their fevered embrace of Hellenic art, Germanic myth, and


\textsuperscript{471} A portrait of Kupffer posing as the saint is reproduced in Gustav Fritsch, ed., \textit{Nackte Schönheit. Ein Buch für Künstler und Aerzte} (Stuttgart: Hermann Schmidts, 1907).
an unwavering faith in the power of culture to transform individuals and entire societies were held up as symbols of what they believed to be the nation’s common values.

Furthermore, their insistence that they were the true inheritors and protectors of classical German literature and philosophy—cultural interests shared by the bourgeoisie and ruling classes—made them potentially credible agents of reform. They certainly had the possibility to speak to a broader audience than would have been reached by their literary and artistic pursuits alone. Indeed, the artwork of GdE member Fidus demonstrated that under the right conditions, some of their work could actually find a following. In Fidus’s case it was because his illustrations resonated with the burgeoning popular interest in nature and a growing nationalism—certainly not because of, or perhaps better, in spite of his belief in the importance of pedagogical eros.

But what Brand and others in the GdE failed to fully grasp is that their insistence on universal bisexuality was also a critique on the dominant expression of heterosexuality in society. By focusing on the young male’s heterosexual desire for women as potentially destructive to sexual health and personal morality, the GdE was also, by extension, attacking the family as an established social institution. By comparison, Hirschfeld’s discussion of a “third sex,” which occupied its own biological and sexual category distinct from heterosexuality, was considerably less threatening. The Urning might convincingly have been positioned into a site of sympathy for middle-class political action. Yet the GdE’s rhetoric of complete personal freedom in sexual matters endangered the core of middle-class social and religious values and was perhaps always fated to meet a skeptical and dismissive public.
It is ironic that Bab, Friedlaender, and Kupffer so insisted on the effects of society and culture on sexuality as expressed and as practiced. They never brought such an understanding to the perhaps inevitable response to their own challenges to sexuality in the very society and very culture they were critiquing. As such, they were also essentialists about the role of one’s biological sex in determining individual destiny. They were therefore hostile to any opportunity to more closely align the GdE’s declarations about individual self-determination with the burgeoning women’s movement. Rather, their elitism and insistence on their own uniqueness prevented them from engaging directly with the very people who could have given them the support they needed to reach a larger audience. Furthermore, their blind faith in the redemptive possibility of culture was unjustified. The decentralizing forces accompanying the birth of mass media in the early twentieth century made it difficult for a self-appointed cultural elite even to be heard, much less to lead.

In contrast to the GdE, Hirschfeld and the WhK enjoyed far greater success, particularly in the more permissive social environment of the Weimar Republic. In 1919, Hirschfeld established the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for sexual research) in Berlin to house his vast personal archive of medical literature on sex and sexuality. Hirschfeld continued to be a prolific writer and tireless public speaker, qualities that by the 1920s made him an internationally renowned expert on sexuality.472 But his increased

472 For more on the institute and its activities, see Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld: Leben und Werk*, 198–228; See also Manfred Herzer, “Das Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee—vom Institut für Sexualwissenschaften bis zur Selbstauflösung,” in *Goodbye to Berlin?: 100 Jahre Schwulenbewegung: eine Ausstellung des Schwulen Museums und der Akademie der Künste*, 17. 203
public profile and Jewish heritage made him a favorite target for Nazi harassment in the last days of the Weimar Republic. In May 1933, SA troops destroyed the institute and all records related to his lifetime of research. Hirschfeld, who had already embarked the year before on a worldwide speaking tour, never returned to Germany and died in exile in France in 1935. Fortunately, Hirschfeld’s published volumes were so widely distributed that it remains relatively easy to access even the earliest and rare works.\footnote{Steakley, \textit{The Writings of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld: A Bibliography}.}

As a consequence, Hirschfeld remains much better known and he has been rightly lionized for his early educational efforts and attempts to increase public awareness about issues of sexuality. But no matter how distasteful, it is important to recognize that he was continually challenged, and some of his ideas improved, by having Brand and the GdE as constant, vocal foils. They continually warned of the potential negative consequences of pathologizing sexual behavior to the detriment of personal freedom.

Brand and the GdE insisted that meaningful personal freedom could only be born of a bold self-expression in a crucible of fiery resistance. From those struggles would come purity. The Eulenburg scandal offered Brand and the GdE a portent of how that quest for purity could turn against them. In a way they could never foresee, the very struggle they sought produced more pronounced expressions of virulent racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and nationalism, culminating in Nazi dictatorship. In the aftermath of the Third Reich, they were forgotten.


\footnote{Steakley, \textit{The Writings of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld: A Bibliography}.}
Figure 1. Élisàr von Kupffer, *Die Entwaffnung* (The disarming; 1914), oil on canvas, 119 x 57 cm. Fondazione Monte Verità. Centro Culturale Elisarion (CCE), Minusio, Catalog Number 180.
Figure 2. Élisàr von Kupffer, *Amor Dei Victoria* (1917), oil on canvas, 160 x 117 cm. CCE, Catalog Number 157.
Figure 3. Adolf Brand, untitled, (without year). From *Rasse und Schönheit*, a supplement to *Der Eigene* beginning around 1925 and featuring Brand’s nude photography.
Figure 4. Adolf Brand, untitled cover, *Der Eigene* 11, no. 7, (October 1926).
Figure 5. Adolf Brand, untitled cover, Der Eigene 11, no. 9, (1926).
Figure 6. Fidus, *David vor Saul, Der Eigene* 3, no. 2 (July 1899): back cover.
Figure 7. Fidus, *Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, *Der Eigene* 4, no. 5 (May 1903): 297.
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     R 43 Reichskanzlei

EKD Archiv des Diakonischen Werkes der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, Berlin

GStA-PK Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
     HA Kammergericht

HHA Haeberle-Hirschfeld-Archiv für Sexualwissenschaft, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

SM Schwules Museum, Berlin

SWITZERLAND

CCE Centro Culturale Elisarion, Minusio

PRINTED PRIMARY MATERIAL

PERIODICALS

Berliner Tageblatt
Breslauer Zeitung
Deutsche Tageszeitung
Der Eigene
Eros
Extrapost des Eigenen
Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen
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